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FROM THE BEQUEST OF
JOHN HARVEY TREAT
OF LAWRENCE, MASS.
(Class of 1862)

and love; of an atoning Saviour and his all-sufficient blood, the only ransom for all sins and uncleanness: ye might guess that there would be among them overflowing brotherly affection, kindness of heart to all men, patience under suffering, forgiveness of enemies, contentment in distress, sweet affection for Christ, and loving gratitude for his unspeakable mercies.—Yes, you taught men to think on these things—but go—hear the conversation, the speeches that are afloat now-a-days, and how will your ears tingle and burn? You will hear oaths and blasphemy, anger and strife, among persons that affect to reverence your memories! You will hear contempt poured upon holy things, and Christ dishonoured on every occasion! You will hear murders coolly commented on as things tolerable and justifiable in “the wild justice of revenge”—nay you will hear of things more brutal still! For, go over all the world, look into all the haunts of crime, the dens of iniquity in the four quarters of the globe, and then come back to unhappy Ireland again, and you will find that it is left for the people of that wretched land to outdo the deeds of other lands in this apostate age, and to have among them those who can coolly talk at noonday of wholesale massacre, as a thing of which Irishmen may be capable, and in which the Irish nation may not blush to be involved! And to put the crown upon this monstrous iniquity, the men that you will hear conversing thus, are not as you might at first suppose, bold, daring, fool-hardy Infidels by

profession, but men that imagine, or pretend to imagine, that they are followers of the faith of yourselves and your followers, and that they hold the doctrines of the ancient saints of Ireland.

But away with the delusion! Away with the idle and mistaken notion that such men as we have alluded to, have any portion in the faith which was held by the saintly three of whom we write! What? you belong to the Church that Patrick planted, and Columbkille watered, and Bridget adorned! Do you indeed? What signs of it are to be seen in your lives and families? in your conversation and habits? in your manner of bringing up your children? in your intercourse with men around you? Do you reflect that *they* taught that *without holiness no man shall see God*? And do you strive to be holy? or pray to God for that Spirit which can alone make your heart holy? Do you teach your children to pray, "O God give us thy Holy Spirit to make us holy and bring us to thee, for Christ's sake?" Or do you despise such things, and pay no attention to them? It is all very fine for you to flatter yourself with the notion of being a good Catholic, and a follower of the blessed saints of old, but if you dont follow their example in living by the faith of Christ as they did, if you trust in any other hope of salvation than that one Saviour and Mediator, that one offering for sin on which they relied, the vilest heretic may be nearer to entering the kingdom of heaven than you are.

We have heard a great deal of talk of late about the "Irish nation," "Ireland for the Irish," and other such sentiments: but I am strongly inclined to fear that there is a great deal of cant and hypocrisy in all this. I cannot at all think, as many of my neighbours seem to do, that the men that brag most in this way, are the best Irishmen, or the greatest credit to the country. For what is an "Irishman," and who are "the Irish?" Are they those that talk most, and are most busy in going about making speeches, and bullying the people? That forced them so often to come miles upon miles from their homes and honest callings, in the night perhaps, and on Sundays, for no earthly manner of good whatever? Are they the people that are spreading such discontent, and idleness, and wicked thoughts among the people? that would try to instigate us to bloodshed and rebellion? Are these true-hearted Irishmen? Are these pious Catholics? If so, woe be to the day when I had the misfortune to be born an Irishman and a Catholic!

But no, my injured Church! my insulted country! Resting-place of Patrick! Birth-place of Bridget and Columbkille! Sweet Island of Saints! whose soil is enriched with the treasured relics and mortal remains of so many worthies of old, whose spirits are long since gone to be with God! There are yet to be found in thee some more faithful representatives of what thou wert in thy better days. There are yet Irishmen in Ireland. And amid

the torrents of overflowing Infidelity, and the base efforts of seducers to inveigle and betray the simple, there are still to be found some animated with the spirit, even though in a lower degree, which breathed in our ancient saints. There are yet some, thank heaven, among the poor and humble of our countrymen, as well as among their betters, who derive their principles and feelings, not from the detestable and Atheistic productions of this age, but from the Holy Scriptures, that blessed fountain of truth and wisdom that Patrick and Columbkille and Bridget, and their disciples, did so much love and study; and when I think of the Christian spirit, the real Irish kindness, the hearty love, and honest sincerity, that I have seen in men so instructed, I can find sources of consolation and rejoicing in thinking that the soul of Ireland is not yet dead; that her spirit, though afflicted and depressed, has not yet departed, but gives hope of revival and renewed life in better times; and when I contemplate these things, and remember these true Irishmen, I can thank God that I was privileged to be born in Ireland.

But let Irishmen beware how they suffer themselves to be led on by the lying revolutionary newspapers and pamphlets of this age. Let them not be such gulls as to listen to the speeches of every one that talks about "Ireland," "the Irish," "the nation," &c. Whenever any one comes about with discourses of that kind, be sure that in nine cases out of ten, he is on the look out for some of your money,

and watch him cautiously, just as you would a man that had his hand in your pocket a while ago feeling for something to steal. Remember that some of those who write the smartest pieces in the newspapers, and the most exciting songs, are as we are told Protestants educated at Trinity College in Dublin, who have got infected with Infidel principles, and spend their time in doing the work of Satan in endeavouring to seduce you from the ties of religion and morality. Remember that it is generally believed to have been a Protestant, a Scholar of Trinity College, who penned that brutal ode beginning with, "Who fears to speak of ninety-eight," from which the spirit of Irish Christianity turns away with indignant and sickening disgust: and that he who wrote those diabolical lines, was one that professes to hate the Church of Rome for her corruption, and to be anxious to promote Protestantism in Ireland. And men of this sort will profess to be friendly to the cause and objects of the poor, whose religion they despise and hate. They can swear by the names of our ancient saints, (who hated swearing,) in order to subserve their own base ends: and oh, how many poor souls have been, by their designing and hypocritical malice, drawn away from the simplicity of Christ. But we are I fear in danger of spending too much time on these persons and their opinions, having better themes to occupy us. The Lord grant them repentance of their wickedness.

There are a great many ancient histories of St. Patrick in existence, most of which were

first written, as they stand at present, about the twelfth century, that is, about six or seven hundred years after St. Patrick's death ; they were taken probably, at least in part, from documents much older, with many additions and alterations, such as pleased the temper of those who took the work in hand. There are also several ancient histories of St. Columba in existence, one in particular, by a writer called Adamnanus, which is very old indeed, being a work, as it is thought of the seventh or eighth century. Of St. Bridget, in like manner, there are several ancient lives remaining to our times. There are also in existence various other important records relating to these saints, works said to have been written by them, &c. ; from all which documents, lives, and other records, we may collect whatever can be now known of these ancient worthies.

Many of these ancient lives and histories have been published at different times, but generally in a way that places them quite out of the reach of ordinary persons, they being too costly for any but rich people to buy ; and even if one could buy them, they are in Latin mostly, so that few could read them : and if they were in the plainest English, yet they are too big for one person in a thousand to think of reading through them. I have no doubt, therefore, that a few extracts from some of the works alluded to will be read with much interest, and that my countrymen generally will be glad to have a little true and authentic information relative to the important subject before us.

By far the largest and most remarkable collection of such old histories of "The Three Saints," as I have spoken of, is that published at Louvain, in 1647, by the learned and industrious friar, father J. Colgan. The volume here mentioned contains seven lives of St. Patrick, by different authors; five different lives of St. Columbkille, and six of St. Bridget, with copious notes, and long dissertations on various points mentioned in the histories. One life of St. Patrick, and one of St. Bridget, are in the Irish language, all the rest in Latin. These two Irish are some of the shortest, but some of the Latin ones are very long, and the whole volume is nearly as large as a Bible in its contents; and it is now a very scarce book. The lives are full of extraordinary accounts of miracles and wonders from beginning to end, which lead some persons to regard them as altogether fabulous. This however is a hasty conclusion to come to; for the most learned and judicious authors are of a different opinion: and it appears certain, that although these multitudinous collections of miracles are justly rejected as untrue, not only by Protestants, but also by the most sensible and well-informed members of the Church of Rome, yet the histories are, as to their general features, founded in fact; many of things mentioned in them being confirmed and corroborated from other sources of information. It is therefore most safe to suppose, that the authors who wrote these lives as they stand at present, collected all the traditional information, true, or doubtful, or false,

which came in their way, and with this, and abundant other matter supplied by a fertile imagination, they embellished and enlarged upon the meagre accounts which they found already in existence: each author according to his own taste putting things before the reader in such a way as he thought most calculated to gratify the prevailing passion for the marvellous, or supply food for the devout meditations of persons influenced by the sort of piety that could find refreshment in such narratives; a sort of piety then not uncommon.

In consequence of the injudicious taste by which these ancient writers were so much guided, the matters of which they wrote, even the most important of them, are left in very great obscurity. And therefore while there is sufficient of what is really important and interesting, that we can regard as being pretty certain or nearly so, the greater part of the times, places, dates, and names, are so differently stated in the different accounts, that it seems quite impossible satisfactorily to reconcile the contradictions connected with them. Father Colgan indeed, and other learned authors, have spent much labour in examining the different statements to find out if possible which is true, or nearest the truth, but very few, even of learned men, will find time or opportunity to wade through the long dissertations so written, and fewer persons still of those who read them, will be able to come to any very satisfactory conclusion on the subject.

Since the time of Father Colgan, other au-

thors have handled the same subjects, and partly extracting from his work, partly publishing afresh other old lives and records besides those which he published, and partly adding critical notes and comments, they have helped to throw further light on the subject. Among these writers we may mention in particular one or two of the more distinguished. Dr. Lanigan here deserves to be first named, as the most eminent writer on the Church History of Ireland whom the Church of Rome has ever produced. His "Ecclesiastical History" of Ireland is a work displaying immense learning and candour (at least in general): an abridgment of it, by Mr. Carew, Professor of Divinity in the Royal College of Maynooth, is provided for the use of the students in that Institution. It will not however be detracting from Mr. Carew's merits to say, that it is to be regretted they cannot have Dr. Lanigan's four volumes in their original state, as it is hard for any one inferior in learning and spirit to that eminent man, to give a fair abridgment of his work.

The Abbé Ma-Geoghegan, in his History of Ireland, published in French at Paris, in 1758, has also given a circumstantial account of many of the ancient saints of Ireland, and among them, of "the Three" here mentioned in particular.

Father Alban Butler also in his Lives of the Saints, has given those of the same Three with his usual learning and research. And those who wish to have more extensive information than we can give here, of the current and popu-

lar histories of these worthies, can refer to that work. It is unnecessary for us to speak particularly of the larger "Acts of the Saints," and other foreign and Continental works on the same subjects. Those who have occasion to consult such works will scarce look for direction in a volume like the present.

The learned priest, Dr. O'Connor, who wrote under the name of 'Columbanus' in 1810, has also some important matter in his writings on the History of St. Patrick, which we shall have occasion to refer to hereafter. Dr. O'Connor was a lineal descendant of the last king of Ireland, and one of the most deeply-read men on Irish history and Irish records whom the last century produced. He had also fine opportunities of improving his knowledge on Irish affairs, as he was employed by the Duke of Buckingham to superintend his splendid collection of records relating to Ireland, and to prepare copies of some of his most valuable manuscripts for the press.

Protestant writers have also done much to illustrate this subject, from the days of Archbishop Ussher to the present time. That celebrated prelate, the most learned man to whom this country ever gave birth, (as his writings testify, and his candid antagonists will admit,) has been most distinguished in these researches: and his labours in the investigation of our ancient Church History. Some of his conclusions however have been proved incorrect, by the labours of more recent authors on the same side.

The learned Sir James Ware is next to be noticed : in his "*Antiquities of Ireland*," "*Writers of Ireland*," and other works we find valuable matter connected with the present subject.

And coming nearer to our own time, we have Mr. Phelan, late Fellow of Trinity College ; who in the course of a controversy between himself and the late Dr. Doyle of Carlow, published a learned and critical *letter*, under the signature of "*Declan*," containing a good deal of very ingenious and useful criticism on the records of St. Patrick which have been handed down to us from antiquity.

Nor should we omit to notice here Sir W. Betham's "*Irish Antiquarian Researches*," a work in which is made a considerable addition to the store of printed documents relating to our ancient saints. In the second part of this work, the author of it has given, from the "*Book of Armagh*," one of our most valuable ancient Irish manuscripts, another life, and additional records, of St. Patrick, besides those already printed in the collection of Father Colgan, and other works of the kind. The "*Antiquarian Researches*" however contain some most extraordinary errors, of which one instance may be given here.

In the beginning of the *Life of St. Patrick* printed from the *Book of Armagh*, we are told, that before the coming of St. Patrick to preach in Ireland, Palladius, another missionary, was sent over here by Pope Celestine ; but that he failed in his mission, because as the

writer says, "he was prevented by the circumstance that no man can receive any thing of earth, unless it be given him from heaven." (See St. John, iii. 27.) Now Sir William's translation of this passage from the Latin is, "he was forbidden to receive oblations, [that is as he explains it in the note, 'grants of land,'] because no man can receive any land, unless it were given him from heaven." (I. A. Researches, part II. p. 306.)

The last work which we shall have to mention of the class which we are at present noticing is by G. Petrie, Esq., M.R.I.A. That gentleman has published in the eighteenth volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, a most learned and interesting essay of considerable length on the History and Antiquities of Tarah hill, enriched with copious extracts in the Irish language and character, from ancient manuscripts in Trinity College Library. Amidst a quantity of very curious matter on the general subject of the essay, he has introduced an extremely interesting dissertation on the history of St. Patrick, in connection with the subject of his preaching at Tarah: this dissertation ought to be read by every one who proposes to examine the subject critically to any great depth, as it abounds with very important observations and remarkable notes on the questions treated of. We shall have occasion in a subsequent page to introduce one or two important extracts from this very valuable and learned production.

Although the matter which we shall have to

bring before our readers, cannot fail to prove very entertaining, as well as instructive, still it is to be remembered that our object is rather to inform than to amuse: and we shall therefore carefully avoid bringing in any thing for the mere sake of gratifying a taste for novelty or romance. And where we shall have occasion to introduce any thing that we or they might wish to be true, but that is really uncertain, or only probable, we shall be careful to inform the reader of the doubt existing upon such points.

Irish taste might perhaps suggest that St. Bridget ought by right to be placed first in order, before her illustrious companions of the other sex. But I have many reasons for adopting the present order in preference, of which it will be enough to state that I follow in this respect the course pursued by that high authority, the learned Father Colgan already mentioned.

THE LIFE OF SAINT PATRICK.



Of his Youth and Education.

ONE might suppose that from having so many accounts of St. Patrick as I have mentioned, it would be easy to come at the truth of all the principal circumstances of his life, so as to give a correct account of the place where he was born, the year of his birth, the time when he came to Ireland, his age when he died, &c.; but the multitude of histories by different authors has had quite a contrary effect, for there are so many contradictions in them, and such conflicting statements that it is quite impossible to form any certain conclusion as to which of them is right, or what is the truth on any of these points. Indeed these contradictions, as well as the immense number of miracles included in the old lives of our saint, together with other reasons, have led some persons, especially among Protestants, to doubt whether there ever was any such person as St. Patrick, or altogether to deny his existence; but the arguments in favour of such a monstrous supposition have had little weight with learned and thinking men of any creed or party.

The late Dr. Ledwich in particular, author of

a work called the Antiquities of Ireland, gained himself an unenviable and disreputable notoriety by boldly denying that any Patrick had been the means of converting the Irish to the Christian faith: stating that the story of St. Patrick was a fiction of members of the Church of Rome, to serve their own purposes in a later age, and that there is no account of any celebrated Patrick in Ireland before the ninth century. Dr. Ledwich however did not lay claim to the odious merit of the originality of this singular opinion: he was able to quote two authorities older than himself who seemed of the same mind, authors who lived in the seventeenth century: one Ryves, a master in chancery: the other a writer named Maurice, who touched on the matter in a book he wrote, called a "*Defence of Episcopacy*."

Dr. Ledwich thought it a strong proof in favour of his opinion, that there is scarcely any mention of St. Patrick in the works of authors who wrote in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries: for it seems incredible that so famous a man as the saint, should be so passed over in silence by almost all writers for three hundred years after the time in which he lived. Moreover it seemed likely, that if he had done so great a work as the conversion of Ireland, Venerable Bede who wrote in the eighth century, would have mentioned his name in some part of his Church History, as he often speaks of the Church of Ireland, but still he says not a word about him. He even mentions in his introduction that Ireland was quite free from

serpents ; yet he never hints that there was any tradition about this having been caused by the miraculous agency of a saint ; as indeed how could he, that tradition having been invented several ages later ?

Moreover Dr. Ledwich thought, that if Pope Celestine had been the person that sent St. Patrick to Ireland, (as some suppose he was, and still more thought so in Dr. Ledwich's time,) in that case the Roman writers of Pope Celestine's time would have mentioned it where they allude to the conversion of Ireland ; but they do not even mention the name of St. Patrick ; although they do mention another person named Palladius who was sent here a little before Patrick's time by Pope Celestine, to be bishop of the Irish Christians that were here then. This is the more remarkable because Palladius stayed here only a few weeks, according to the general account.

But not to trouble the reader with any more of Dr. Ledwich's ideas, or lengthen our story by dwelling on them, we may content ourselves with a short answer to his reasons. First then, they were not sufficient to convince Archbishop Ussher or Cambden, the two great antiquaries to whom such doubts were first propounded : and secondly they can mostly be satisfactorily explained, without coming to the Doctor's conclusion.

The miracles should not make us doubt that there was such a person as the saint, for the miracles would not have been invented unless it was known from tradition that such a person

had lived here. It is no wonder if grateful hearts and creative imaginations piled such fictitious honours upon the memory of their apostle. But however such miraculous tales may attract and please wrong minded, ignorant, superstitious people, they are not received for true by respectable and well-informed members of the Church of Rome. Tillemont, a learned French author, calls them "a great heap of miracles, improbable enough, to say no more of them:" and Bollandus, another most learned author, calls them "the patchwork of most fabulous writers, none of which are older than the twelfth century." These observations will be a sufficient apology for our not troubling the reader with any of these endless miraculous anecdotes. (See Tillemont, *Memoires*, vol. xvi.)

The silence of early writers who came after St. Patrick's time is certainly remarkable; but then considering the destruction of books and learning by the Danes, the savages, in the ninth and tenth centuries, we may conclude with Dr. O'Connor, that "the silence alone of such authors as remain, (supposing such silence) should not be admitted in evidence to overthrow a national tradition so universal in every part of Ireland, so immemorial, and so incorporated, as that of St. Patrick is, with the traditionary usages, names, anniversaries, monastic ruins, and popular manners of one hundred millions of Irishmen who have existed since his time." There are however *some* notices of St. Patrick in Irish writings of the ages after that in which he lived.

The argument about Pope Celestine proves nothing at all against St. Patrick's existence. It only proves that Celestine had nothing to do with the sending of him : and this is just what the most learned and critical writers on the subject are led to conclude from many different reasons. In fact there is no certain evidence in history that St. Patrick was ever at Rome : the contrary seems more likely.

With regard to the birthplace of St. Patrick there is very great uncertainty : England, Scotland, and France, have contended for this honour. But some of the best judges have concluded that the latter place has the best claim, and that he was born at or near the city of Tours in that country : here however we must be content with a probability. His father as he himself tells us was a deacon of the Church, and his grandfather a priest, for it seems that our clergy at that time were not forbidden to marry. His father's name was Calpurnius, and his grandfather was called Potitus. These circumstances are stated also in his ancient biographies, in that of Joceline for instance. Joceline was a Welch monk, that lived in the time when the English invaded Ireland in the twelfth century : and he was brought over to Ireland by John de Courcy the conqueror of Ulster, who desired him to write the life of St. Patrick. He accordingly did so, and his is one of the longest of those ancient lives that still remain. It consists chiefly from beginning to end, of a collection of those extraordinary miracles already mentioned. Joceline tells us in this

work, that sixty-six other authors had composed lives of St. Patrick before that time.

Patrick's parents being Christians, he was while young, duly instructed in religion, and taught the way of salvation : but his heart was hardened against the instructions he received, and he profited little by them ; and it was not until heavy affliction humbled him, that he was led to see what a bad heart he had by nature, and what necessity there was for his conversion and repentance before he could hope to enjoy peace, or escape the anger and judgments of Almighty God.

When he was sixteen years old, it appears that a band of Irish pirates under one of their princes, invaded his native country on a plundering excursion, to rob and pillage whatever they could lay hold of. They carried off many prisoners, and among the rest, Patrick, who was brought by them to Ireland, and sold as a slave. The part of the country which was the scene of his captivity appears to have been in the county of Antrim, where he was employed for six long years in feeding pigs and other servile work for his master, whose name was Milcho. While in this state, having much time for reflection, he was brought to see the wickedness of his former ungodly life of carelessness : and becoming truly penitent, he spent much of his time in prayers for forgiveness and amendment, and the love of God was by degrees more and more shed abroad in his heart.

After six years spent in slavery, he was en-

abled to escape : we are told that a vision appeared to him and directed him to go to a place more than one hundred miles off, where he would find a ship ready to sail, that would bring him home ; and the story goes on to say that he did actually find the vessel, and was conveyed safely in her to his native land.

When we find that his first connection with Ireland was of such an unpleasant nature, we might expect that he would have learned to hate the Irish, by whom he had been treated with such injustice and cruelty. But he had not so learned Christ ; he knew that it was the part of a Christian to love one's enemies, to be kind to those who hate and persecute, and to return good for evil. And therefore Patrick became very anxious to do good to the Irish, and to preach the Gospel to them, that they might believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved through him. In his captivity in Ireland, the youth had learned the Irish language, and this would naturally be a great help to his proposed work. We are told that he put himself under the care of some of the most holy and learned teachers of religion at that time, in order to be more fully instructed before undertaking his work ; and that he thus spent a very long time studying with St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and St. Martin, bishop of Tours, both eminent and famous divines. A very ancient manuscript preserved in the Cotton Library in England, tells us that it was the same Germanus, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, that

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ordained him and sent him over to this country to preach the Gospel. But there is so much disagreement and obscurity connected with his ordination and mission that we cannot say any thing of them for certain.

His coming to Preach in Ireland.

Laoghaire, the son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, succeeded to the throne of Ireland in A. D. 429, and reigned thirty years, or according to some authorities, longer than that period. The most general account of the introduction of Christianity in Ireland, represents it as having been the work of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, during this reign: and some histories tell us that Laoghaire himself became a Christian before his death: this however is more generally discredited, as contrary to the accounts contained in the best records.

We have mentioned that the greatest uncertainty prevails concerning the Chronology of St. Patrick's life: the greatest number of testimonies however, Irish and foreign, agree as to the following facts. 1°. That he was born in the year 372. 2°. That he was brought captive into Ireland in the sixteenth year of his age, in 388, and that after four or seven years' slavery, he was liberated in 392 or 395. 3°. That on the death of Palladius, in 432, he was sent to Ireland as archbishop, having been first, according to some authorities, consecrated by Pope Celestine, or as others state, in Gaul, by the archbishop Amatorex or Amator. 4°. That he arrived in Ireland in 432, and after

preaching there for sixty years, died in the year 492 or 493, at the age of about one hundred and twenty years. 50. That he was buried at Saul or Down, in Ulster.

Mr. Petrie who gives the above dates in his *Essay on Tarah hill*, clearly shows how uncertain they are : yet he agrees with Dr. O'Connor in giving it as his opinion that neither these uncertainties, nor the silence of ancient authors, ought to be received as an objection to the mission of St. Patrick : since even "the ancient churches, and other monumental remains connected with his name, found in all parts of Ireland, as well as the vivid traditions still universally current, are sufficient to satisfy any candid inquirer, that such a personage must have existed, whatever may have been the period at which he flourished." (Mr Petrie's *Essay*, p. 106.)

St. Patrick then, according to the most received accounts, having arrived in Ireland in the year 432 to preach the Gospel to the native Irish, landed first in the south part of Leinster : but met here with such opposition from the Pagans and their idolatrous priests, the Druids, or magi, that he was obliged to discontinue his efforts in that quarter, and came away unsuccessful. He next turned his attention to the north of Ireland where he had been formerly a captive ; and here his labours were rewarded with better fruit. Dichu, a prince of the place where he came ashore was the first convert, and he with many of his subjects were baptized into the Christian faith. He next tried Milcho

his old master, but in vain, for he continued obstinately to adhere to Paganism and rejected the preaching of the Gospel.

St. Patrick having gone about preaching during the latter end of the year 432 and part of 433, until the approach of Easter, determined on celebrating that festival near Tarah in the county Meath. Here he had an opportunity of preaching the Gospel before the king and the states-general of the kingdom: and as this is one of the most remarkable passages in his life, and connected with different interesting particulars, and as it is besides a fact on which all authorities concur, we shall be more particular in narrating the circumstances: we shall give the account in Dr. Lannigan's words, as quoted by Mr. Petrie in his Essay:—

“On the following day, which was Easter-eve, or Holy Saturday, St. Patrick continued his journey, and arrived in the evening at a place called *Ferta-fer-feic*, now Slane. Having got a tent pitched there, he made preparations for celebrating the festival of Easter, and accordingly lighted the paschal fire about night-fall. It happened that at this very time the king, Leogaire, and the assembled princes, were celebrating a religious festival, of which fire-worship formed a part. There was a standing law, that, at the time of this festival, no fire should be kindled for a considerable distance all around, until after a great fire should be lighted in the royal palace of Temoria or Tarah. St. Patrick's paschal fire was, however, lighted before that of the palace, and being seen from the heights of Tarah, excited great astonishment. On the king's inquiring what could be the cause of it, and who could have thus dared to infringe the law, the Magi told him that it was necessary to have that fire extinguished immediately, whereas if allowed to remain, it would get the better of their fires,

and bring about the downfall of his kingdom. Leogaire, enraged and troubled on getting this information, set out for Slane, with a considerable number of followers, and one or two of the principal Magi, for the purpose of exterminating those violators of the law. When arrived within some distance from where the tent was, they sat down, and St. Patrick was sent for, with an order to appear before the king and give an account of his conduct. It was arranged that no one show him any mark of respect, nor rise up to receive him. But on his presenting himself, Herc, the son of Dego, disobeyed the injunction, and standing up, saluted him, and receiving the Saint's blessing, became a believer. He was afterwards Bishop of Slane, and celebrated for his sanctity. Passing over certain contests between St. Patrick and the Magi, and some partly prodigious and partly ridiculous fables, we find St. Patrick the next day (Easter Sunday) in the palace of Tarah, preaching before the king and the states-general, and disconcerting the Magi. The only person that on his appearing there, rose up to pay his respects to him was Dubtach, an eminent poet and instructor of Fiech, son of Erc, who afterwards became Bishop of Sletty. Dubtach was the first convert of that day, and the Saint became greatly attached to him. Thenceforth he dedicated his poetical talents to Christian subjects, and some works of his are still extant."—*Eccl. Hist.* vol. I. pp. 223—5.

For the leading facts here mentioned there is sufficient authority in the agreement of all the lives of Patrick published up to Dr. Lanigan's time: and they are still further corroborated by these which have been since published from the "Book of Armagh." There is indeed connected with them the usual admixture of legendary fable and miracles so characteristic of the Lives of Irish Saints, but there is nothing in them which should impeach the truth of the leading incidents which they record.

Of the Hymn of St. Patrick.

Connected with the important event of St. Patrick's preaching at Tarah, there is still preserved an ancient document of most singular interest, which has never yet been printed in any form that could afford the public generally an opportunity of becoming acquainted with it. It has only appeared in the learned Essay of Mr. Petrie, from which we are about to take it. What makes it worthy to be so particularly noticed is the circumstance that it is, to all appearance, in its original form, the very oldest undoubted monument of the Irish language remaining; and it is also a most remarkable record in evidence of the religious doctrine which St. Patrick inculcated. The document of which we speak is an Irish hymn, which the Saint is stated to have composed and sung with his followers, when approaching Tarah, surrounded by his Pagan enemies.

The circumstances which led to the composing of this hymn are thus detailed in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, a work compiled in the ninth or tenth century, but as Colgan (who has published a Latin translation of it from the original Irish) supposes, first written by St. Evin in the sixth century, though afterwards corrupted with spurious additions: we translate from Father Colgan's Latin version:—

“When the obstinate king saw that he could not effect the destruction of the holy man in the way that he first thought of, he thought of another method. He invites

him to Temoria, [i. e. *Temur*, or *Tarah*,] promising that he would there make a public profession of the Christian faith before the nobles of his kingdom, and believe on Christ in the presence of the whole realm. This was the profession made by the mouth of this wicked tyrant, but the intention of his heart was of a very different sort. For along the road by which the holy Bishop was to pass, he arranged various schemes for destroying him before he should get to Tarah. But though the faithful servant of Christ was well aware of these doings, by divine revelation, yet casting his cares upon the Lord, he resolved to go to Temoria, and leave the impending danger to be disposed of by the providence of God. He promises therefore that he would go after the king: and accordingly follows him with eight clergyman and the youth Benin: whom he secured against all the plots and dangers that were set in their way, by his own holy benediction and prayer. And so it was that they passed along through the bands of the assassins that were waylaying them: whose eyes were holden, that they should not discover them. For there appeared to their eyes only eight stags, with one hind, on whose back there seemed to be some parcel carried along. In this way therefore this wonderful man and his comrades, with the blessed youth Benin, who carried on his shoulder a copy of the Holy Bible, came safe and sound through the midst of their enemies, all the way to Temoria, protected by the salutary effects of the prayer of the man of God, as by some sacred shield. Then it was that the holy man composed that Hymn in the vernacular tongue, which is commonly called *Feth-fiudha*, and by others *St. Patrick's Breastplate*: and it is ever since held in the greatest repute by the Irish, because it is believed, and proved by abundant experience that it preserves those who devoutly utter it, from dangers threatening either soul or body."—*Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 126.

We shall now give to our readers a copy of this ancient Hymn, together with the ancient preface prefixed to it; as translated by Mr. Petrie from the original Irish Manuscript, which is preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. This Manuscript is called

the "*Liber Hymnorum*" or "*Book of Hymns*:" and Archbishop Ussher considered it to be in his time a thousand years old. According to this it would have been written about the year 625. It is in that ancient dialect of the Irish called Bearnla Feine, in which the Brehon laws and oldest tracts in the language are written:—

"Patrick composed this hymn. In the time of Loegaire, the son of Niall, it was composed. The cause of its composition was to protect himself with his monks against the enemies unto death, who were in ambush against the clergy. And this is a religious armour to protect the body and soul against demons, and men, and vices. Every person who sings it every day with all his attention on God shall not have demons appearing to his face. It will be a protection to him against every poison and envy. It will be a safeguard to him against sudden death. It will be an armour to his soul after his death. Patrick sang this at the time that the snares were set for him by Loegaire, that he might not come to propagate the faith to Temur; so that it appeared to those lying in ambush that they were wild deer, and a fawn after them, that is Benin. And *Feth fiadha* is its name."

The Hymn.

"At Temur to-day I invoke the mighty power of the Trinity. I believe in the Trinity under the unity of the God of the Elements.

"At Temur to-day I place the virtue of the Birth of Christ with his Baptism, the virtue of his Crucifixion with his Burial, the virtue of his Resurrection with his Ascension, the virtue of the coming to the Eternal Judgment.

"At Temur to-day I place the virtue of the love of Seraphin; the virtue which exists in the obedience of angels, in the hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Reward, in the prayers of the noble fathers, in the predictions of the prophets, in the preaching of the apostles, in the faith of the confessors, in the purity of the holy virgins, in the deeds of just men.

“At Temur to-day I place the strength of heaven, the light of the sun, the whiteness of snow, the force of fire, the rapidity of lightning, the swiftness of the wind, the depth of the sea, the stability of the earth, the hardness of rocks, [between me and the powers of Paganism and demons.]

“At Temur to-day may the strength of God pilot me, may the power of God preserve me, may the wisdom of God instruct me, may the eye of God view me, may the ear of God hear me, may the word of God render me eloquent, may the hand of God protect me, may the way of God direct me, may the shield of God defend me, may the host of God guard me against the snares of demons, the temptations of vices, the inclinations of the mind, against every man who meditates evil to me, far or near, alone or in company.

“I place all these powers between me and every evil unmerciful power directed against my soul and my body, as a protection against the incantations of false prophets, against the black laws of Gentilism, against the false laws of heresy, against the treachery of idolatry, against the spells of women, smiths, and druids, against every knowledge which blinds the soul of man. May Christ to-day protect me against poison, against burning, against drowning, against wounding, until I deserve much reward.

“Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ after me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ at my right, Christ at my left, Christ at this side, Christ at that side, Christ at my back.

“Christ be in the heart of each person whom I speak to, Christ in the mouth of each person who speaks to me, Christ in each eye which sees me, Christ in each ear which hears me.

“At Temur I invoke to-day the mighty power of the Trinity. I believe in the Trinity under the unity of the God of the Elements.

“Salvation is the Lord’s, Salvation is the Lord’s, Salvation is Christ’s. May thy Salvation, O Lord, be always with us.”

We have given this hymn in full, as many

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persons might be anxious to have the whole of so curious and scarce a document, otherwise we should rather have contented ourselves with extracts from it, as parts of it will be, no doubt, very obscure to a large number of our readers.

We are informed by Mr. Petrie that the belief in the magical powers attributed in the above hymn to women, smiths, and Druids, continued not only in the succeeding ages, but also in the popular belief of the people in several parts of Ireland to the present time. The "King of the Elements" is a name used throughout Ireland to this day, to signify God. We learn also from Mr. Petrie the remarkable fact that the *Luireach Phadruig* is still remembered popularly in many parts of Ireland, and a portion of it is to this day repeated by the people, usually at bed-time, with the same confidence in its protecting power as, according to St. Evin, was placed in it previously to his time.

And supposing that some of our readers may be devoutly disposed to profit by their example, and use for themselves a part of St. Patrick's prayer, we add here a short form taken chiefly from it, which, if used reverently and earnestly, will, we have no doubt, bring down signal blessings from on high to those who so use it:—

A Prayer for a Devout Christian, taken from Saint Patrick's Hymn.

"Almighty God, for Christ's sake, teach me to pray. May thy power, O God, preserve me, may thy wisdom

instruct me, may thine eye watch over me, may thine ear hear me, may thy word, O God, render me eloquent, may thy guidance direct me, may thy gracious help secure me, against the snares of the devil, the temptations of vices, the lusts of the flesh, and all dangers that may threaten my soul or body.

“Christ be with me, to save me ; Christ before me, to lead me ; Christ after me, to bring me back from sin and error ; Christ in me, the hope of glory ; Christ under me, as my support and foundation ; Christ over me, to shield and cover me ; Christ my only hope, my all in all.

“Salvation is of the Lord : salvation is by Christ : may thy salvation, O Lord, be always with us for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

St. Patrick’s “Confession.”

After preaching at Tarah, St. Patrick continued to pursue his labours throughout Ireland with great success ; large numbers of people in every quarter receiving his doctrines and baptism at his hands. Ulster was the first scene of his evangelical labours and successful ministry, and when he had scattered the good seed of the word of God through that province, and subsequently through Leinster and Connaught, he directed his attention to Munster last. The reason why he did not come to the south sooner, was probably, because there were already many Christians in that part, who had ministers and preachers among them before this ; so that Munster was not in the same complete state of heathen darkness as the rest of Ireland. Some authors tell us that he found four venerable men named Ailbe, Declan, Kiaran, and Ibar, engaged in preaching the

gospel in the south, and that he consecrated them to the office of bishop: but the best of our old Irish records are at variance with this story, and the account which they give of the years in which the holy preachers here mentioned, died, makes it impossible for them to have had this connection with St. Patrick: so that we must regard the history of their consecration by him as nothing better than a fable.

Ængus, King of Munster, was Patrick's most eminent convert in the south; and he rendered very valuable assistance to the saint in propagating the faith, and establishing the church in his kingdom.

St. Patrick is said to have founded the Cathedral Church of Armagh in the year 472, and after this to have gone to the Abbey of Saul in Down, where he spent his latter days in religious retirement. His death is most generally assigned to March the 17th, in the year 492.

He wrote different works, some of which have come down to us, such as his Hymn, given already in a former page. But the most curious and valuable of these works, (which is also the one most generally admitted genuine,) is what is called, "*The Confession of St. Patrick.*" This is a letter written to the people of Ireland in the latter days of his labours, explaining to them the motives which induced him to come and preach among them, and also mentioning briefly different circumstances connected with his past life; his birth and parentage, his captivity, conversion, and resolution to preach the

gospel in Ireland, the difficulties he met with from the hindrances of friends, &c., and how by God's grace he was able to overcome all of them, and finally how successful he was in Ireland. Our readers will naturally desire to hear a little of what this holy man says of himself in his Confession, and so we have thought it well to write some parts of it here, which will be found highly interesting :—

Extracts from St. Patrick's Confession.

Chap. I.—“ I Patrick, a most ignorant sinner, and least of all the faithful, and most contemptible among many, had for my father Calpurnius a deacon, the son of the late priest Potitus, who was of the town of Benaven, a small place in Tabernia. Near it was Enon, where I fell into captivity. I was then about sixteen years old. I was ignorant of the true God, and was brought to Ireland in captivity, with so many thousands of persons, according to our deservings, since we forsook God, and kept not his commandments, and were disobedient to our priests, who advised us for our salvation. a

“ And there the Lord opened my heart to a sense of my unbelief, and taught me, when it was late, to remember my sin and be converted to the Lord with all my heart, even to him who regarded my low estate, and pitied my youth and ignorance, and watched over me before I knew him, and before I had sense to discern between good and evil, admonishing me and encouraging me as a father would his son.

“ This I know for certain, that before I was humbled, I was like a stone that lies in the deep mud, and he that is mighty came, and in his mercy raised me up, and to be sure, he placed me upon high, and hath set me upon the top of the wall. And he inspired me with a desire to be useful to this nation, to which the love of Christ has transplanted me, and presented me, for my lifetime, if I shall be worthy of it. 2

Chap. 2.—“ I must therefore without fear boldly spread the name of God every where, and leave it even after my

death, to my brethren and children, whom I have baptized in the Lord, so many thousands of people. Although I was not worthy or deserving that the Lord should grant this to his servant, or that after such grievous troubles, after my captivity, and the many years I spent with that people, he should bestow upon me such grace as I once in my youth did never hope for nor think of. But when I came to Ireland, I was every day feeding the cattle, and often in the day I used to pray, and the love of God was more and more kindled in me, and his fear and faith was increasing in me, so that in one day, I would offer as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night almost as many: and I used likewise to stay in the woods and mountains, and get up before daylight for prayer, through snow, through ice, through rain, and I felt no injury, nor was there any sloth in me, as I can now see, because the Spirit was fervent in me.

Chap. 3.—“Again a few years after I was in Britain with my parents, who received me as their son, and solemnly asked of me, now at last after all the tribulations I had suffered, never to go away from them. And there it was that I saw in a vision of the night, a man coming as it were from Ireland, named Victricius, with innumerable letters; and he gave me one of them; and I read the beginning of the letter to this effect, ‘The voice of the people of Ireland.’ And as I was reading the beginning of the letter, I thought at that very moment that I heard the voice of the people dwelling near the wood of Focluth, which is not far from the western sea. And they cried out thus as if with one voice, ‘We beseech thee holy youth, come and walk among us.’ And I was very much pricked to the heart, and could read no farther: and so I awoke. Thanks be to God, who after very many years hath hearkened to the voice of their cry.

I was not a believer in the only God from my youth, but remained in death and in unbelief until I was sorely chastened, and in truth I was humbled by cold and nakedness; and I used every day to traverse Ireland much against my will. But this was rather for my good, because by these means I was reformed by the Lord, and he hath fitted me for being at this day what was once far enough from me; that I should concern myself or take

trouble for the salvation of others, when I used not to think even about my own.

Chap. 4.—“Whence was it that I was afterwards able to discern and value so great and salutary a gift of God, so as to relinquish native land, and parents, and the many offers that were made me with weeping and tears? And there I gave unwilling offence to some of my seniors. But by the guidance of God, I in no wise consented nor gave in to them; yet not I, but the grace of God which prevailed in me: and I resisted them all, in order to come and preach the gospel to the people of Ireland, and endure ill-treatment from unbelievers, and hear my mission spoken reproachfully of, and bear many persecutions even to bonds; giving up myself and my prospects for the sake of doing good to others.

“And if I shall be worthy, I am ready even to lay down my life unhesitatingly and most willingly for his name’s sake; and I desire to devote it to him even to death, if the Lord indulge me. Because I am greatly a debtor to God, who bestowed on me so much grace, that many people should be born anew in the Lord by my instrumentality, and afterwards confirmed.

“I am desirous then to await the promise of him who never deceives us, as he assures us in the gospel, that ‘Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob;’ as we do believe that they shall come from all the world.

“We must therefore fish diligently and well, as the Lord bids us, saying, ‘Come after me, I will make you to become fishers of men.’ And again he saith in the prophets. ‘Lo I send many fishers and hunters, saith the Lord;’ so that we must stretch our nets busily, to enclose a large and plentiful draught for God; till there shall be clergymen every where to baptize and preach to the poor and needy people, as the Lord speaks in the Gospel, warning us and saying, ‘Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I shall tell you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’ And again he saith, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who shall believe and

be baptized, shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.' And again the prophet of the Lord exhorting us saith, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons shall prophesy, and your daughters, and your old men shall dream dreams. And also upon my servants and upon my handmaids will I pour out of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.' And Osee saith, 'I will call her my people that was not my people, and her beloved that was not beloved; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God.' And truly in what a way has Ireland, that never heretofore had the knowledge of God, or worshipped any thing but filthy idols up to this time, been of late made the people of God, and entitled to the name of his children.

Chap. 5.—“Many were trying to hinder this mission of mine; and indeed some of them were talking behind my back, and saying, ‘What does he want, running in the way of danger among those enemies that know not God.’

“Now then I have simply told my brethren and fellow-servants, who have believed me, for what reason I have preached, and am preaching for the strengthening of your faith. How I wish that yourselves would make still greater efforts, and prosper still more abundantly. This should be my glory, because a wise son is the glory of his father. Yourselves know, and God knows too, in what a way I have spent my time among you from my youth, in the true faith, and with sincere heart, even to those clans where I am living, I have preached the faith and do yet preach it. I have been travelling among you and every where about for your sakes, in the face of many dangers, even away to remote parts, where there were no inhabitants beyond them, and where no person had ever come to baptize, or ordain clergymen, or confirm the people in the faith; by the grace of God, I have diligently and with all readiness gone through all for your salvation.

“Now I call God for a witness upon my soul, that I do not lie, nor write to you, as some men might, from a desire to flatter, or from covetous motives, nor in the hope of gaining honour among you. Enough for me is that ho-

nour which is not seen of men, but believed in the heart : and faithful is he that promises. He never can lie. In this present time however I see myself exalted above measure by the Lord : not that I was worthy or deserving of his granting me this ; for most certainly do I feel that humiliation and poverty agree with me better than luxury and riches. Besides Christ the Lord was poor for our sakes. But I who suffer distress and sorrow, were I to desire wealth ever so much, yet have not got it ; nor do I think myself very much in need of it, because I am in daily expectation of either death, or plots against me, or being reduced to slavery, without any occasion on my part. But I dread none of these things, because of the promise of heaven : for I have cast myself into the hands of Almighty God, who rules every where ; as the prophet saith, ‘Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall nourish thee.’

“Behold I will again and again briefly explain the words of my confession. I declare solemnly in truth, and with rejoicing before God and his holy angels, that I never had any occasion, except the gospel and its promises, for ever returning to that people, from among whom I had made my escape. But I beg of all that believe in God, and seek and fear him, whoever of them will condescend to look at, or receive, this letter that I, sinful Patrick, although unlearned, have written in Ireland, that no one will ever say that my ignorance is to have the merit of any little work I may have transacted or brought to light, according to the purpose of God. But believe and take it for certain that it was God who did it. And this is my confession before I shall die.”

Of St. Patrick's Preaching and Teaching.

We have now run through in a brief manner most of the principal facts connected with St. Patrick's life and works. The last thing we shall have to touch upon will be the nature of his teaching, and the sort of doctrines he used to deliver to the people that he converted. It is the more necessary to say a few words on this subject, because of the misrepresentations

and false notions that have been circulated about this good man, chiefly by the influence of foreigners, and those that have been, though born in Ireland, too much attached to foreigners, and imbued with their teaching. It would be a fine thing for us if we could have some of the sermons which St. Patrick preached to his followers, to read and ponder over; but we cannot have them, for its likely they were never written down, or if any of them were, they are all lost before this. I am sure that if we had a sight of them, they would be well worth reading, and prove that he who preached them was a good Catholic, a zealous preacher of the true Church, and an honest follower of our Blessed Lord and his Apostles.

Unfortunately however, we have none of St. Patrick's sermons remaining. Still there are two reasons, the consideration of which may lead us to regard the loss with less regret; as they will show us that it is not after all of so great consequence.

For *first*, although we have not any of St. Patrick's sermons, we have some other works of his, such as his Hymn, and Confession, already mentioned, &c., from which we can learn a good deal of the nature of his doctrines, as we shall see more at large presently.

And *secondly*, although we have not any of St. Patrick's own sermons, what is far more important, we have still remaining plenty of the discourses of them that he learned from, for we are to bear in mind that it was not any freshly-formed faith or new-fangled religion

that he came to teach among us, but the same good old ancient and heavenly truths that were in the Catholic Church of the Lord from the beginning : the very same that our Lord and Saviour taught with his own blessed lips in the streets of Jerusalem, when the crowds used to follow his preaching, and take such pleasure in hearing him : the very same that the holy apostles took down from their Master's lips, and wrote in the Bible for us to read : aye the very same that they used to teach the Christians themselves, and write to them in their letters, which are still preserved in the New Testament for us to read. We have not Patrick's sermons to be sure, but we may be certain that if it was the will of God we should know them, they would not have been lost, but kept for our times, like the teaching of the Blessed Apostles. We have not Patrick's sermons, but then we have the preaching of St. Paul, and St. Peter, and the other apostles : we have the gospels they wrote, and the letters they sent to the Christians in those days, all written down in the Bible ; and if we pay attention to what is in that holy book, and pray God to teach us to understand it, and bless it to us, we need not fear that we shall be at a loss for good instruction.

Now as for the way in which St. Patrick hoped to obtain salvation for himself, and taught others to look for it, we may be very sure that it was just the same way as St. Peter and Paul and the other apostles taught men to seek it. St. Paul says, (Tit. iii. 5,) " Not by

works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us ;” and just so St. Patrick says, (Confession, chap. 1,) that by nature before the grace of God changed his heart, he “ was like a stone lying in the deep mud,” all filthy, and unable to lift itself out, heavy and dead ; but “ he that is mighty came and in his mercy raised him up, and set him on the top of the wall :” that is the Almighty Saviour came and rescued him, when there was no other hope, and not only took him out of the mud and filth, but set him up high on the wall ; raised him to be a goodly living stone in the wall of that spiritual edifice which is “ built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” St. Paul says, “ Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus :” and St. Patrick did not attempt to lay any other : good works no doubt he taught the people to do, and very bad preacher he would have been if he did not ; and very bad Christians they, if they were not careful to maintain such good works ; but very little trust he seems to have put in his own good works as a means of attaining salvation : no, Christ, and His grace, he always mentions as the ground of his hope and confidence.

St. Patrick, like all the other good old Christian saints of ancient times, had a wonderful regard and love for the Word of God, and took delight in studying the Holy Scriptures himself and reading them to others. This appears plainly from various things mentioned about

him by his different biographers, and also from his own writings. He quotes great quantities of Scripture in his "Confession," as may be seen in the extracts from that work already given; and he does not on the other hand in any one part of it, bring tradition or the authority of the Church to prove the soundness of his views: it is plain from this that he was well acquainted with the Bible, and thought it a safe guide. Moreover his own nephew, Secundinus, (or St. Sechnald or Seachlin, as he is otherwise called,) wrote a hymn, in which among other things said in praise of his uncle St. Patrick, one is, that "he found a sacred treasure in the Sacred Volume." This hymn of Secundinus may be seen in Father Colgan's work, and elsewhere. It was also St. Patrick's opinion "that the continual meditation of the Scriptures adds vigour and vegetation to the soul," as is stated in the book on the "Abuses of the World," which is attributed to him. (See Harris's Ware, page 24, vol. 1.) We are further told that he constantly employed himself in learning by heart and singing, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs: so Seachlin informs us in the hymn above mentioned, and also Joceline in his Life of St. Patrick, and likewise that most ancient Life of the Saint written in Irish, which is the first in Colgan's collection, and is attributed to Fiech, Bishop of Sletty, in the Queen's County, an intimate friend, as they say, of St. Patrick, and consecrated bishop by him.

Joceline also tells us that St. Patrick has

read and explained the Bible to the people for whole days and nights together. "On one occasion," says he, "St. Patrick was preaching to a great many people that came together from different parts: he was reading and expounding to them, one after another, the four holy volumes of the Evangelists, for three days and nights together, and all present thought that no more time had passed than the space of only one day: so happily were they deceived and profitably delighted with the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth." (Joceline, chap. 94.) And we have seen already, that when he went to preach at Tarah, he took care to have a Bible brought with him, carried by the youth Benin.

In connection with this subject we may mention a very interesting fact that ought not to be omitted. There was lately found in the County Fermanagh, a very curious relic of St. Patrick, preserved by some of the Maguires, the descendants of the old princes of that country. This relic was a box of the greatest antiquity, made of wood, and encased in metal; this was fastened up for ages: but when opened lately, it was found to contain a copy of the four gospels, apparently written in the fifth century; which is supposed by that judicious and critical antiquary Mr. Petrie, to have been given by St. Patrick himself to the first bishop of Clogher. A full account of this very curious and interesting old remain of antiquity is given in the volume of the Transac-

tions of the Royal Irish Academy, which we have already quoted.

St. Patrick had a singular veneration and respect for the Lord's day; a feeling common more or less to all good Christians. It will be sufficient to give in proof of this, one passage out of his life by Joceline, though other similar things might be mentioned. Joceline says, (cap. 156, Colgan's Trias, p. 99 :)

“ This man of God used to spend the Lord's day in a solemn manner with singular devotion, out of respect to the memory of that greatest of all solemnities, which the prince of life, having suffered death, made to be a subject of exultation in heaven, earth, and hell, by the melody of his reviving resurrection. He therefore resolved in his mind, and made it a solemn practice, binding as a law, that wherever Saturday evening came upon him, there he would stay, through respect for the Lord's day that was approaching, spending all that night, and the next day, in Hymns, and Songs, and Spiritual Psalms, having his very inmost soul occupied with divine contemplations, ever till the morning of the second day of the next week.”

i. e. till Monday : Sunday being the first day of the week. What would this good man have thought of it if he had seen some of the Sunday doings of our time; and the contempt thrown upon Him who gave the command to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?” What would St. Patrick have thought of journeys, and meetings, and speeches, and political agitation, carried on during the hours of that very day that he so honoured and loved? And yet they who do these things will pretend to be his disciples. How some men do deceive themselves !

St. Patrick's mode of honouring the Lord's day appears to have been common with the old saints of Ireland; for it is attributed to St. Columbkille also as we shall have occasion to notice again; and the like is remarked of Abbot St. Fechin who lived in the seventh century, and died according to our authors in 664. For having come on a journey through Leinster to the bank of the Liffey on a Saturday evening, at the hour of vespers he betook himself to prayer; and the monks who travelled with him "sympathizing with their venerable head, and fatigued after their journey, put him in mind that it was the Lord's day, in which we should cease from every labour and enjoy rest." Whereupon he resolved "to occupy the whole time that he staid there through respect for the Lord's day, in uttering the praises of God." (*Vita S. Fechini* 2da, c. 38; Colgan, vol. ii. p. 138.) It is in like manner recorded of St. Aed, that once seeing some women going to bathe themselves on a Sunday evening, he cautioned them not to do it "because," said he, "it is the night of the Lord's day." And the story goes on to say that when they would not mind him, but persisted in doing so, their hair afterwards fell out as a judgment on them for their irreligious behaviour. (Colgan, AA. SS. Feb. 28, p. 421, cap. 34.)

As for purgatory it will not require any cunning argument to explain what was St. Patrick's view of that subject, the case being pretty clear. It will be sufficient to draw the

reader's attention to what is said in a work ascribed to the Saint himself, and enumerated among his writings by the candid Father Colgan, and others. The work we speak of is called a treatise "Of the Three Habitations," and the subject of it is opened in the following words :

" There are three Habitations under the power of Almighty God, the first, the lowermost, and the middle : the highest of which is called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven ; the lowermost is termed Hell, and the middle is named the present World, or the Circuit of the Earth. The extremes of these Habitations are altogether contrary to each other, and not joined together in any fellowship : for what alliance can there be between light and darkness, or between Christ and Belial ? But the middle hath some resemblance to the extremes. For in this world there is a mixture of the bad and good ; whereas in the kingdom of God there are none bad but all good : but in Hell there are none good but all bad. And both these places are supplied out of the middle. For of the men of this World, some are exalted into Heaven, others are thrust down into Hell. For like are joined unto like ; that is to say, good to good, and bad to bad ; just men to just angels ; transgressors to disobedient angels ; the servants of God to God, and the servants of the Devil to the Devil. The Blessed are called to the kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world, and the wicked are driven into eternal Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels."

There is St. Patrick's doctrine for you, and sure it must be confessed that right good sound doctrine it is, and worthy of a true Catholic, just such as our Blessed Lord and his Apostles taught in the Bible ; and no wonder ; for it was that Blessed Book that he took for his guide and instructor before he set out upon his mission at all, as his different biographers

inform us, St. Benin for instance, and Joceline, who tells us that when St. Patrick after seeing the vision that invited him to Ireland, resolved to go there; he first went to Gaul, “and lest he should run in vain, or teach what he did not learn, he applied himself to St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and in order to attain a fuller proficiency in the Christian religion and knowledge, he stayed with him eighteen years, [some say more, others less,] reading and fulfilling the Holy Scriptures.” (Joc. chap. 22.)

As to the stories about St. Patrick's Purgatory, which have been circulated and too readily believed, there is little use in mentioning them in arguing with Protestants; and indeed no well-informed and candid member of the Church of Rome will care to bring them forward, or think them worthy of much credit, since the learned Archbishop Ussher has fully shewn that “neither Nennius, nor Probus, nor any of the earlier writers of the Life of St. Patrick, have mentioned one word about such a place; but that Henry, a monk of Saltrey, who wrote about the year 1153, [that is about 650 years after St. Patrick's death,] was the first who gave any hint about such a place; which Cæsarius, a German monk, in the century following, carefully propagated, and others have since improved.” And as St. Patrick did not preach nor believe in the existence of a purgatory to remove sin after death, so neither do we find any prayers for the benefit of

souls in purgatory, taught, used, or encouraged by him.

We have already seen a pretty long prayer of St. Patrick's in his Hymn that he sung going to Tarah. That prayer of his is offered to Almighty God himself; it appeals to Christ the Redeemer of sinners, but neither in it nor in any other of St. Patrick's works do we find any of those prayers to saints which afterwards became so common: nor any supplications to God to hear us for their merits, as if Christ were unable or unwilling to supply all our wants.

Nor is there any proof that the clergy in St. Patrick's time were obliged to be unmarried, but rather the contrary: St. Patrick's own father and grandfather were ordained to the sacred office, and none of his writings give us any hint that it was after they had done with marriage. And one of the laws passed at a council held in Ireland by St. Patrick, requires the *wives* of clergymen to wear a veil when going out.

As for the doctrine of the Pope's supremacy, and his being the true and only successor of St. Peter, it must be confessed that this doctrine as at present popularly taught, was unheard of in Ireland before the twelfth century, and that St. Patrick and his disciples never believed in any such thing: otherwise this Blessed Saint would never have allowed his own nephew St. Seachlin to mention him in the way he has done in that hymn above mentioned, speaking of him as one "upon whom the

Church is builded as upon Peter ; whose apostleship he hath obtained from God, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against him ;" and Christ himself is said in this hymn " to have chosen him [i. e. St. Patrick] his vicar upon earth." Furthermore, if St. Patrick had taught his converts all those notions about the necessity of obedience to the Pope and Italian court that are now received, we would never have heard of those obstinate quarrels between the old Irish Christians and the Church of Rome, that prevailed so much in early times, more than a thousand years ago, as we read in histories of the Church : and if all the old Irish had been as obedient to the Pope as some ignorant people think they were, they would not have been called so many bad names as they were, " schismatics," " bad Catholics," &c., by the ancient writers of the Church of Rome.

St. Patrick is said to have founded an immense number of churches, including many whose relics yet remain and are associated by tradition with his name. He is also stated to have ordained and consecrated an incredible number of bishops and priests. Nennius, a writer of the ninth century says three hundred and sixty-five bishops, and three thousand priests ; and others of his biographers give accounts equally extraordinary : but when it is said that he ordained bishops as many as there were days in the year, and churches to the same number, we must take this to be a hyperbolic mode of expressing a very large number :

otherwise it would be impossible for thinking persons to give any sort of credit to these extraordinary statements.

And now I have set down whatsoever seems most worthy of credit and attention in the life of this most illustrious individual, and most exalted saint: and I trust that the interesting records of him here presented to the reader, will be a means of raising his character greatly in the esteem of many, who have hitherto regarded the subject with indifference or contempt, having heard of St. Patrick only in the foolish, ungodly, and lying stories which ignorant or designing persons circulate with regard to him. I hope that I have also done something to rescue his memory from the injurious representations which are too prevalent with regard to it, and supplied something more profitable, instructive, and really pleasant for the Christian reader, than is to be found in the common histories of him which are going. And if I shall be so successful as to give any of my readers a distaste and disgust for the nonsense and absurdities, the confused mixture of ignorance and apparent learning, of which those histories are so full, my labour shall be any thing but vain. Successful indeed shall be this little work if it may at all help in cherishing among the people a true national taste; a taste for national Christianity, and true devotion: if it may at all help to lead my brethren more and more from fable and invention to history and fact; from credulity to faith; and from blind and stupid veneration of names, to holy

imitation of characters : that Irishmen may know, and understand, and follow, the true teaching of those who converted their forefathers to the faith of Christ; and living according to their doctrines in this life, and cherishing their hopes on earth, they may enjoy their company everlastingly in heaven, along with that Blessed Saviour whose cross and passion was the sole purchase-money of their life and immortality.

END OF THE LIFE OF ST. PATRICK.



ST COLUMBKILLE.

THE LIFE OF ST COLUMBKILLE.



His History and Actions.

It is with pain and indignation that we enter on our brief annals of holy St. Columbkille: to think that the memory of this blessed man, the brightest ornament of his country, and most exalted specimen of Christian holiness and successful zeal in his Master's cause that his native land perhaps ever produced, should be misrepresented, stained, and polluted, as it has been, by the unholy and wicked associations that designing men, of short-sighted cunning, have endeavoured to connect with it. But our work is not entirely one of sorrow or unmixed heaviness; happier sensations blend themselves with it to cheer its darker aspect; and while we mourn the fact that Irishmen can be brought to think that there is any truth in the degrading fictions that are palmed upon St. Columbkille and circulated about the country, with the apparent sanction of his venerable, but much abused name; we can on the other hand take pleasure in the thought, that our present little work may be a means of exposing the villainy of the publications alluded to, opening the eyes of the simple and credulous, who have too readily been induced to listen to such abomina-

ble stuff, and rescuing the sainted memory of this good man, from being prostituted by association with the unnatural and filthy wickedness with which some have endeavoured to connect it: but of this we shall speak more plainly hereafter. Let us now turn to the more pleasing work of delineating his life, character, and actions.

St. Columbkille then was born of noble parents, both his father and mother being of royal blood. His father was Fethlimid, (Phelimy) son of Fergus, son of Conall Gulban, which latter personage, (the saint's great-grandfather,) was son to the famous Niall Naoi-giallach, or Niall of the Nine Hostages; so called from nine kingdoms which he conquered and obliged to give hostages to him. A great number of monarchs are enumerated as having belonged to his family. St. Columba's mother was *Æthnæa*, and she was herself also lineally descended from kingly ancestors, among whom were Oliol, or Ailildus, the Great, and Caheer Mor, or Caithir the Great.

Venerable Bede, who wrote his Church History in the year 731, and who is the best authority we can have on most subjects mentioned in it, gives the following authentic and interesting account of St. Columba in the third book of his History, (chap. 4:)

“In the year 565,” says he, “from the Lord's Incarnation, there came from Ireland a presbyter and abbot, distinguished by the habit and life of a monk, whose name was Columba, to preach the word of God to the provinces of the Northern Picts: that is, to the people that live in

the rugged and wild Highland mountains, separated from their more southern territories. For the Southern Picts, who inhabit the country on our side of the aforesaid mountains, had long before, (as they say,) left the errors of idolatry and received the true faith; the word having been preached to them by Bishop Ninnias, a most reverend and holy personage belonging to the British nation, who had received regular instruction at Rome in the faith and mysteries of the true religion.

“Now Columba came into Britain at the time when that most powerful monarch Bridius, the son of Meilochon, was king of the Picts, in the ninth year of his reign: and by his preaching and example he converted that people to the Christian faith: in consequence of which they bestowed upon him the aforesaid island, [Iona,] that he might have it to build a monastery on. For it is not to say large, but of about five families, according to the English way of reckoning: and it is to this day held in possession by his successors: he himself too was buried there when he was seventy-seven years old, about thirty-two years after his coming to preach in Britain. But before he had set out for Britain, he had erected a noble monastery in Ireland, in a place which is called in the language of the Scots [i. e. the Irish] *Dearmach*, [or *Dairmagh*, pronounced *Durrow*,] which means the Field of Oaks, being so named from the number of oaks growing there. From both these monasteries very many other ones were afterwards propagated by his disciples, both in Britain and in Ireland, among all which the island monastery, where he himself rests in the body, holds the chief place of authority. This island always has for its ruler a presbyter Abbot, to whose jurisdiction both their entire province, and the bishops themselves too, contrary to the usual order of things, are bound to be subject: according to the example of that first teacher of theirs, who was no bishop, but a presbyter and monk: concerning whose life and sayings there are said to be some writings in the possession of his disciples. But whatever kind of person he was himself, this we know of him for certain, that he left after him successors remarkable for their strict continence, divine love, and regular discipline: men indeed who use doubtful methods of calculating the great festival of Easter, because in that distant out-of-the-way corner of the

world no person had ever explained to them the decrees of councils relating to the observance of the Paschal solemnity, but yet, men who carefully observed those works of piety and chastity, and those only, which they could learn from the writings of the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles."

Such is Bede's short, but very interesting, account of the Apostle of North Britain: we have given it here in the outset as the most clear and authentic memoir that remains of him. But in the various lives of him that have been published by Colgan and others, there is to be found a very large quantity indeed of other most interesting particulars relating to him: some of which we shall have to bring before the reader's notice. It may be remarked in general that the lives of St. Columba here alluded to, if fewer in number than those that exist of St. Patrick, are yet far more satisfactory and much less encumbered with the difficulties and discrepancies that abound in the latter.

The most celebrated life of Columba is that written by Adamnanus, Abbot of Iona, his successor in that place, who flourished about A.D. 690; and who is very famous in the Church History of that period both for having written this account of St. Columbkille, and also for the important part which he acted in other transactions that occupied much attention at that time. His Life of our Saint is divided into three books, the titles of which are as follows: I. "Of the Saint's Prophetic Revelations," (which contains in Colgan's edition

fifty chapters.) II. "Of his Miracles," (in forty-six chapters.) III. "Of his Visions of Angels," (comprehending twenty-four chapters.)

This Life of St. Columba is so remarkable a production, that we think it worth while to be somewhat particular in describing it to the reader; especially as we shall have occasion to refer to it frequently again in the succeeding pages. That it is the genuine work of Adamnanus seems never to have been called in question in modern times, and yet if an ignorant person might make bold to hazard a conjecture, there does appear some ground for doubting whether at least we have it in the exact state in which it came from his hand. For Venerable Bede, who lived a little after the time of Adamnanus, makes no express mention of the book at all; not but that he was well acquainted with the character of Adamnanus, for he praises him highly, and speaks very much at large about another book that he, (Adamnanus,) wrote, which was a description of parts of the Holy Land: this Bede gives a very full account of, and explains all about its contents; but he never says there that Adamnanus wrote a life of St. Columbkille; which latter ought notwithstanding, to have been first mentioned as the most famous of his works, if Bede had the same opinion of it as our modern learned men. Unless any one will say that Adamnanus having sent a copy of his work "On the Holy Places," to the English king in whose dominions Bede lived, might have made that work

better known there than the other. But however, Bede was aware that some of the monks of Iona had compiled memoirs of St. Columba, for he alludes to writings of the sort in the passage of his Church History already quoted: yet in such a way as to show that he was either altogether ignorant of the contents of those memoirs, or else that he regarded them as being of very little value: the first supposition is perhaps the most reasonable; his words are, "concerning St. Columba's life and sayings, *there are said to be some writings* in the possession of his disciples."

Be that, however, as it may, this much seems certain, that whatever corruptions or additions may have been introduced into the Life of St. Columbkille written by Adamnanus, still that composition is for the most part, perhaps entirely, a work of the age to which it is attributed; as is abundantly confirmed by a careful examination of its contents, and of the matters of fact and points of doctrine on which it touches. We may observe, that Adamnanus is not regarded as the oldest biographer of St. Columba, nor even the oldest whose work is extant. St. Cumeneus, Abbot of Iona, had written one previously, which Colgan considers to be the same with one of those published in his collection; and another Life of St. Columba in the same collection is supposed to be still older. If this be so, however, it will follow that Adamnanus copied largely from those who went before, and they probably from each other, so that at this distance of time it is very hard

to say who was the original author of a good part of these productions; the time *about* which they were written is more easy to be ascertained.

Two Editions of Adamnanus's Life of St. Columba have been published: one by H. Canisius in his *Lectiones Antiquæ*, published at Ingolstadt, in 1604, and afterwards by T. Messingham, in his *Florilegium Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, at Paris, in 1624, where it was copied from Canisius. The other Edition of this work is published by Father Colgan, in his "Trias," so often quoted already. This second Edition was published from a different Manuscript, which was found in Germany, and copied for Father Colgan by the Jesuit Stephanus Vitus (Stephen White.) It contains several words, passages and whole chapters that are not in the former edition of Canisius; in consequence of which Colgan considers that first one to be mutilated and imperfect; but I am not sure from anything I can see, but that it is more likely that the second one is enlarged with corrupt additions and interpolations, as it has some suspicious features, that might lead one to think so: to these we shall have occasion again to refer briefly. For the present we may conclude from what has been said, that the work known as Adamnanus's Life of St. Columba was written a little before Bede's time, but that it is hard to say whether we have any very exact copy of the original work as it proceeded from the hands of this author.

And now as to its contents, it is not a regular

systematic account of his life, narrating in simple orderly succession the principal events occurring in it from childhood to old age, but rather, as the titles of its three parts intimate, an irregular gathering together of the miracles, prophecies, and visions, which have been attributed to him. It tells us nothing of the time during which he was at school, nor when he was ordained, nor by whom, nor for what charge, nor where he lived principally while in Ireland, nor when he left it to preach in Scotland, nor how many years he spent in the conversion of the Picts: there are indeed few notes of time in the work, but yet it seems to refer chiefly to his last years, and the time he spent in the retirement of Iona. Further, it gives us no details of the great Council of Drumkeath, in Ulster, where he is said to have acted a very prominent part, although the ancient Irish records and traditions give much information on this æra in his life. We may say therefore that as a biography the work of Adamnanus is most imperfect and unimportant, but as a record of antiquity, throwing an interesting light on many different subjects, matters of fact and doctrine. it is justly esteemed as most curious and valuable.

St. Columba or Columbkille is said to have been originally named Criomhthan, which is the Irish word for a *fox*, (and is pronounced Criovhan,) but was afterwards called Columba (i.e. a dove.) from the gentle and dove-like qualities which were found in him: the addition *kille* means, *of the churches*; and he was named Columb-

kille, or "Columb of the Churches," from the great number of churches and monasteries which were founded by him.

St. Columbkille was born at Gartan, in Donegal, near the town of Letterkenny. As to the precise year of his birth, there has been some little difference of opinion. It appears certain from Bede and other authorities, that he was in his 77th year at the time of his death, so that the year in which he was born can be easily told, if we can find in what year he died. Ussher and Sir James Ware, following Bede, say that his death took place in 597, and his birth therefore in 521; which is also the year fixed on by Dr. Lanigan. The famous annalist Tigernach assigns his death to 596, and his birth to 519. Father Colgan in a very learned and satisfactory as well as ingenious note on the subject, shows the last to be the most probable opinion: yet he does not think the former year as stated by Bede without some appearance of probability in its favour also, and indeed Dr. Lanigan places his death in 597. It took place on Saturday evening, the 9th of June, or towards the Sunday morning following: this is unquestioned.

St. Columba studied in early youth with different preceptors, who instructed him in Christian literature, and helped to prepare him for the great work which he was to undertake in after life: the most eminent of these teachers was St. Findbar or Finnian, of Moville, with whom he spent his time "improving himself in the knowledge of the wisdom of the Holy

Scripture," as Adamnanus informs us, (Book ii. chap. i,) and growing in grace and in reputation with all that knew him.

St. Columba however, eminent as he was, was still but a man, and subject to like passions with his brethren in this world; and so it came to pass that at some period of his early life, he had the misfortune to incur the punishment of excommunication. Adamnanus, however, who mentions this in the place above quoted, says that the Synod which inflicted this punishment did it for some venial and excusable offences, and not justly; and that the sentence was reversed by the interposition of St. Brendan, of Birr, who was divinely inspired with the knowledge of the injustice of the proceedings against St. Columba.

In his 42d year, Bede says, he came "to preach the word of God" in Britain: but I do not know how to reconcile this with the statement of Adamnanus, who seems to say that about this very period he came to reside in Iona; unless the latter statement refers to his first coming to that island before it was given to himself, so as that he might understand that he went to and fro between it and the main land of Scotland, preaching the Gospel to the Picts (see Lanigan's Ec. Hist., vol. ii. p. 158.) Bede further tells us that it was the Picts who gave Iona to the saint; but Hector Boethius, Leslie, and other Scottish writers, as well as the Annals of Ulster, those of the 4 Masters, and Tighernach, agree in stating that it was from his relation Conall, son of Comgell, King

of the Dalriadies, in Scotland, (i. e. of the parts forming the provinces of Kentyre, Lorne, Argyle, &c.) that St. Columbkille received this isle for his own property. And Archbishop Ussher gives his opinion in favour of the supposition last mentioned. It is said that Conall offered him any part of his dominions he might choose, to reside in; but that his moderate desires were contented with this small isle, called Iona, Hy, or I-Columb-Kille, which has since become so famous from association with his name. Here he spent his latter days in sweet and peaceful retirement, enjoying the company of his beloved disciples, and edifying them by his heavenly conversation and holy example; and here when his mortal career was ended, he breathed his last in peace, and departed to be with Christ.

The assembly of the states of Ireland, known as the Council of Drumkeath, in Ulster, was held under Aodh or Hugh, monarch of Ireland, about the year 590. Besides the monarch Hugh, there were also present at it, Aidan, King of the Dalriedan province in Scotland, the princes of the several smaller kingdoms then existing in Ireland, the nobles and clergy of the kingdom, and also St. Columbkille himself, as we have already intimated. He came to use his great influence in some of the important matters there transacted, in which he took an especial interest, and his exertions were crowned with abundant success. This Aidan, King of the Dalriedan Scots, who is here mentioned, was, according to Dr. Keating, (and O'Halloran

likewise,) ordained King by St. Columba, in the island of Hy, in the year 574. The same fact is attested in Adamnanus's history (Book iii. chap. 5) and in other ancient records. Adamnanus also tells us that while St. Columbkille was at Drumkeath, Donald son of the monarch Hugh, who was still in his childish years, was brought to the saint by those who were entrusted with the care of his education, in order that he might receive the benefit of the saint's blessing, which was willingly bestowed. The circumstances here noticed show what great influence this holy man must have possessed with persons in the highest station of life, when even kings and princes so looked up to him.

We may briefly notice here some of the matters which were transacted at the Council of Drumkeath, which is said to have continued its sittings for upwards of a year. One was, the mediation of a treaty of peace between the Dalriedan colony in Scotland, and the parent state, as mutual hostilities were threatening to arise shortly, from the circumstance that Aidan MacGauran, the King of the Albanian Scots above-mentioned, was unwilling to pay the tribute which the Dalriedans had formerly given to the Irish monarchs, or as others say, because Aidan unjustly claimed a right to the sovereignty of Dalrieda in Antrim. In the discussion that arose upon this question St. Columba exercised his influence so successfully as to prevail upon the entire assembly with the concurrence of the Irish monarch, to remit the odious tribute and ratify a treaty between the

contending parties, which happily ensured the continuance of peace. Another object gained by St. Columba during his visit at Drumkeath, was the liberation of Scanlan, son of Colman, prince of Ossory, who was kept in captivity by King Aodh for refusing to pay the tribute which had been formerly levied on his dominions by the kings of Ireland. The later authors of St. Columba's life, indulging their inventive imagination, say that a miracle was wrought by St. Columbkille to effect Scanlan's deliverance; but such an account is quite contemptible, coming at the time when it first appears in history, and Adamnanus is quite silent on the point: he only mentions a prophecy of St. Columbkille's, which foretold Scanlan's deliverance and future prosperity. A further object which attracted the attention of Columbkille at Drumkeath was, the measures then projected against the Bards, whose entire order was threatened with extermination and expulsion from the country: for the monarch princes, and nobility of the land, and prelates too, we are told, had come to this sanguinary conclusion with regard to them, in consequence of the inconveniences which they suffered from them. Their music and poetry, framed in a spirit of wild clannish enthusiasm, was found too violent an influence to be allowed to arouse at pleasure the passions of the excitable and giddy multitude; and although at times they might exercise a salutary restraint on tyranny and oppression, they had too much the power of tyrannising themselves: and their

power was the more dangerous as the masses of the people are so much more easily stirred up to what is bad than what is good. Besides, these ancient bards had much property, land, and important immunities; from whence it came to pass that their numbers increased so as to render them an intolerable load upon the community; indolent and worthless persons choosing this profession as an easy means of earning an ignoble livelihood. The extinction of the order was therefore resolved upon; but St. Columbkille prevented his native land from being disgraced by so brutal and unchristian a proceeding; and argued on the subject with such ability in the Council of Drumkeath, that the persons forming that body were content to spare the bards, and merely impose such salutary restrictions on them, as the public welfare required.

The convention at Drumkeath seems to have been similar in its character to the Feis, or triennial parliament of Tarah, instituted by the renowned Ollav Folla. This latter, though called a triennial meeting, was in reality, at least in the times of St. Patrick and his successors, held much less frequently than once in three years; nor do we read of any gathering at Tarah of any importance, from the days of St. Patrick to the meeting at Drumkeath. In those simple times they had none of the absurd notions that have since prevailed about annual parliaments, vote by ballot, &c.; nor had they ever probably heard of that wicked, blasphemous, and infidel notion, that the people,

the will of the people, was the source whence originated all political power. God Almighty was not as yet at that time robbed of his prerogative in this land, and the kings and princes whom He had appointed to reign upon the earth were looked up to with more of the respect due to the vicegerents of the King of Kings; although the personal characters of the princes in those days, if it were lawful to take them into account, were anything, very often, but such as might naturally tend to command respect. It must be acknowledged however that liberty was very imperfectly understood in those days, as it still is among us but little understood: the princes were then inclined to usurp, tyrannise, and encroach on the people: the people now are inclined to abuse the liberty their forefathers never had an idea of in old times: and they would in turn if possible trample on the rights given by God to kings and nobles; but the time for this has we trust not yet come.

By the way, speaking of Tarah, and the convention there, we may notice, that St. Patrick is said to have procured there the compilation of a great work called the *Seancus Mor*, which consisted of the ancient historical records and laws of the country, purified from error by a committee of nine persons, consisting of three kings, Laoghaire, Corc, and Daire; three saints, Patrick, Benin, and Cairneach; and three antiquaries, Ross, Dubhthach, and Feargus. This work is said to have been compiled in A.D. 438: but Mr. Petrie has fully

shown how desperately absurd are the common accounts on the authority of which the above statement is made. The *Seancus Mor* is not a mixed compilation of history and laws, but a body of laws solely: there is no clear proof that St. Patrick had any hand in the composition of it, but it seems likely to have been compiled soon after the introduction of Christianity. Dr. Lanigan as well as Mr. Petrie, abundantly exposes the absurdity of the story about the wonderful Committee of Nine. (Vol. 1, p. 371.)

Tarah continued to be the residence of the kings of Ireland until A.D. 565, when it was cursed by bell, book, and candle, by the bishops, according to the account which we subjoin: St. Columbkille is said, but not by the early writers of his life, to have prophesied of the destruction that was to come upon it.

And now to return to the subject of St. Columbkille's own life, it is next to be mentioned that after the Council of Drumkeath was over, he remained for some time in Ireland, visiting the monasteries and religious establishments which he had founded in Ireland; at length he returned once more to his beloved Iona, and there is no authentic account of his having again left it from this to the time of his death.

The Death of St. Columbkille.

“A good name,” saith Solomon, “is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth.” The Life and

death of St. Columbkille, as recorded by those who have written on the subject, seems to afford a beautiful illustration of this sentiment ; for while his life and conversation in the tabernacle of human flesh were of such a character as to win him a good name, in the highest sense of the word, among the worthiest members of the Christian Church, he did not on the other hand forget that he had in heaven a better and an enduring inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, reserved for him to be his portion in eternity. He is described to us as having been, during his life-time, looking, and longing, and praying to his Heavenly Father, for the coming of that happy day, when he should be released from the toils and labours of this present state of humiliation.

“Thirty years,” said he to some near and beloved friends, “have now elapsed since I began my pilgrimage here in Britain, and earnestly have I begged of my Lord, that at the close of this thirtieth year he would release me from my sojourning on earth, and call me away without any longer tarrying, to the heavenly country : and I was beginning to rejoice at the prospect of the holy angels sent from the throne on high to meet my spirit disencumbered from the flesh, and lead it away to glory : but they are retarded in their path and forbidden as yet to bring my soul to paradise : the prayers of many churches have prevailed, and it is my sorrowful lot to be obliged to spend yet four other years in the body ; but when, by the mercy of God, they shall have reached their close, I shall then have a speedy and happy transition, and depart with joy to the Lord, accompanied by his holy angels who shall then return to meet my spirit.”

When these four years had passed, and the last week of his life had now arrived—

“On the very last day of this week, that is on the Sabbath-day, (our Saturday,) the saint himself and his faithful servant Diermit go to the adjoining granary to bless it. And when the saint had entered and pronounced his benediction, and had also seen two heaps of corn stored up there, he added this word with thanksgiving, saying, ‘I sincerely congratulate my brother monks, that for this year likewise, if I shall require to be absent from you, you shall have abundance of bread.’ Whereupon his servant began to feel sad, and to speak thus—‘Father you are often making us sorrowful during this year, so frequently mentioning your departure from us.’ The saint replied, ‘I have a piece of secret intelligence, which if you will promise me faithfully not to disclose to any one before my death, I can explain to you somewhat more exactly the particulars of my approaching end.’ And when the servant in compliance with the saint’s desire, had completed a promise to that effect on bended knees, the venerable man proceeds to express himself in these words; ‘This day is in the sacred volume named the Sabbath, which is interpreted to mean rest: and to be sure this present day is a Sabbath to me, because it is the last of this present laborious life, on which now that my toils and sorrows are come to an end, I enter into my rest, and at this approaching midnight, on the morning of the venerated day of the Lord, according to the saying of the Scriptures, I shall go the way of my fathers. For my Lord Jesus Christ now vouchsafes to invite me, to whom I say, at the middle of this night, I shall go, by his own invitation, to take up my dwelling with him. For so has it been revealed to me by the Lord himself.’ The man upon hearing these afflicting words, began to weep bitterly: while the saint endeavoured, as far as he was able, to administer consolation to him.

“After this the saint leaves the granary, and returning to the monastery, he sits down to rest in the middle of his way, (being easily fatigued from his great age,) at the place where the large stone cross was afterwards erected, which is still seen by the road side.

“Afterwards leaving this place, and going up the little hill above the monastery, he stood at the top of it a little while, and standing there with both hands upraised, he pronounced a benediction upon his community, saying

‘Upon this place, small and humble though it be, not only the kings of the Scots with their states, but also the rulers of barbarous and foreign kingdoms, shall confer great and signal honour: and holy men too of other churches shall regard the spot with no common veneration.’

“After these words, descending from that little eminence, and returning to the monastery, he sat down in his chamber to write out the Psalter; and coming to that verse of the xxxiii. psalm where it is written, ‘*They that seek the Lord shall not want any manner of thing that is good,*’ ‘here,’ says he, ‘at the end of this page I must end my work; let Baithen write what comes after.’ The last verse he wrote was very applicable to the departing saint himself, who shall never want for eternal good things: and the verse following, ‘*Come ye children and hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord,*’ was very well adapted to the succeeding teacher, the father of spiritual children, who, according to the last charge of the departing saint, succeeded him not only in the teaching, but also in the writing. After writing to the end of the above-mentioned verse on the page which he finished, the saint goes into the church, to vesper mass of the night of the Lord’s Day, and presently when this was ended, returning to his lodging, he lays himself on his couch for the night, having the bare flag for his bed, and for his pillow a stone, which is standing to this day near his grave, as a sort of monumental inscription on his tomb.

“After which, when his last happy-hour was now near at hand, the saint remained quiet until the midnight bell was heard to ring, upon which rising hastily, he goes to the church, and running on before the rest, and coming in by himself, he bows himself on bended knees in prayer near the altar: his servant Diermit following him more slowly, sees from a distance, at this moment, the whole body of the church filled within with an angelic light about the saint: which as he approached the entrance, quickly retired from his view. Diermit therefore, coming into the church, exclaims with a sorrowful voice, ‘Where are you, Father?’ and as the brethren had not yet brought their lights, feeling in the dark, he discovers the saint fallen before the altar: then raising him gently, and sitting beside him, he placed his holy head in his own bosom:

meanwhile, the company of monks, running to the place with their lights, seeing the father dying, began to utter cries of sorrow. And as we have learned from some who were present,* the saint, not having yet breathed his last, opening his eyes, looked round him with a wonderful expression of gladness beaming in his countenance, at the sight of the Holy Angels coming to meet him. Diermit then raises his holy right hand for the saint to bless the fraternity of his monks: and the venerable father himself too, exerted himself as well as he could to move his own hand, so as to express by the motion of his hand, that benediction upon the brethren, which his voice was unequal, from the failing of his breath, to utter. And after his holy benediction expressed in this way, he immediately breathed his last. But even after his spirit had left the tabernacle of the body, the face still remained reddish and wonderfully expressive of the joy caused by the vision of angels that appeared to him, so that it was like the face, not of a dead person, but of a living person asleep. The whole church meanwhile was filled with the afflicting sounds of sorrow, which proceeded from the surviving brethren."

"As soon as *Matin* hymns were over, the sacred remains are removed from the church, accompanied by the sweet psalmody of the brethren, and brought back to the apartment from which he had, so short a while before, come out alive. And for three days and as many nights the solemn rites suitable to the occasion are performed with all due reverence and propriety: after the conclusion of which in songs of praise to God, the venerable remains of our holy and blessed patron, wrapped in clean linen, and deposited in a suitable coffin, are committed to the earth, to rise in glorious and everlasting brightness.

"Such then was the close of our illustrious patron's life, and the opening scene of his heavenly reward: who according to the sentences of the Scriptures, is gone to be a partaker in the endless triumphs of the fathers, ranked among Apostles, and reckoned with Prophets; attached to the number of the Saints arrayed in white, who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb: and with them he follows the Lamb his leader, a spotless virgin, pure from every stain, through the gift of our Lord Jesus

* This same expression is used in the very same place by Cumineus, who is said to have written his life of Columbkille before Adamnanus.

Christ himself, who with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, bath honour, power, praise, glory, and dominion everlasting, world without end. Amen."

According to the learned and critical investigation of Father Colgan already noticed, the death of St. Columbkille as here described, took place on the night of Saturday, June the 9th, A.D. 596; or the morning of the following day, which in that year was Whit-Sunday. The ancient annalist Tighernach also mentions that it was on that festival he entered into his rest. The 9th of June has been observed of old as the day of his festival in the parts of Ireland about his native place and elsewhere; and on that day he is commemorated in the Catalogue of the old Irish Saints. But Dr. Ledwich says that "St. Columba was not supplicated in Ireland as a patron saint before the year 1741, when principally through the solicitations of Dr. Burke, late Titular Bishop of Ossory, Pope Benedict XIV. permitted a particular Office and the 9th of June for celebrating his festival." (*Antiquities of Ireland*, p. 74, Edn. of 1790.) Dr. Ledwich also says that it was in consequence of the hostility of "the Columbean institutes to the cause of Popery, that the festival of St. Columba was not permitted to be kept in Ireland" till so late a period. But with all due respect to the memory of the Learned Doctor, we must say that it would appear that his anti-Popish prejudices here led him a little astray; for Colgan gives in his learned work an Office to be used in commemoration of St Columbkille, which was printed at Paris in the year 1620,

(see Lanigan, ii, 250,) with other Offices of the saints of Ireland, in a volume bearing this title, "*Offices for SS. Patrick, Columbkille, Bridget, and some other Saints of Ireland, copied from ancient parchments and manuscript breviaries, and altered with such corrections as to adapt them to the Roman Office.*" Father Colgan himself expresses a judicious fear that the alterations mentioned in this title have not improved the work, or increased its value with the investigators of ecclesiastical antiquities. With regard however to the statement of Ledwich, not having "*Burke's Hibernia Dominicana*" to which he refers, near me at present, I cannot speak at full. It is however most certain (from Bede, &c.) that the successors of St. Columba before Bede's time were violently opposed to the practices of the Roman Church of that day in different matters, and carried on their contentions with them for a long time and with much obstinacy, so that it need not have surprised us, if Columbkille were no very great favourite with foreign branches of the Church of Rome, whatever the Irish portion of that community may think of him. Perhaps Ledwich may be thus far right: viz., that there was no regular sanction in the Church of Rome for the Office in commemoration of St. Columba until 1741; and that before that, only custom, tradition, and private practice, could be alleged for observing his festival. It seems also that whatever prayers were used in connection with his name, they did not in their original form sufficiently accord with the genius

of the Church of Rome as at present existing : for the members of that Church who published those Offices in the form above described, acknowledge in their title, that it was necessary to alter and purify them before publication, in order to make them agree with the structure of their ritual.

In connection with this observation, it is very interesting to notice the differences existing between the forms of the several collects used in the different Offices for the Festival of St. Bridget, as given by Colgan. That which appears, from the simplicity of its form and other reasons, the most ancient, is taken from the Roman Breviary printed at Venice in 1522. It consists of five short lessons, describing some of the miracles attributed to her, and then closes with this collect :—

1.—“Hear us O God of our salvation : that as we have joy on this day the festival of thy Blessed Virgin Bridget, so we may be endued with feelings of true devotion. Through our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c.

The next Office, or form of service, given for the same festival, is taken from an Italian Breviary, the date of which is not given by Colgan : it ends with this collect :—

2.—“O God who didst vouchsafe to the Blessed Virgin Bridget, grace to prevail over her enemies, grant to us thy servants that believe in thee, that *by her prayers and memory*, we may have power to be delivered from every visitation of thine anger, through our Lord,” &c.

Then comes another Office, which is also from an Italian printed manual, whose date is not mentioned : the concluding collect in it runs thus :—

3.—“O God, who dost on this day make us joyful with the annual solemnity of thy Blessed Virgin Bridget, mercifully grant, that as we are enlightened by the bright example of her chastity, *so we may be helped by her merits.* Through our Lord,” &c.

The last of the four Offices given by Colgan, (which he puts first, as the most complete, and probably best “adapted to the Roman Office,”) is one printed at Paris in 1622: it ends with this collect:—

4.—“*O Bridget, Light of Leinster, Quintessence of Chastity, open Sanctuary of Mercy, Incense of Piety, demand the release of thy family from their sins, and after the close of their sorrows, rest in glory.*”

Nothing can be more curiously striking than the gradual progress of alteration observable in the form and spirit of these collects, as we pass on from one of them to another. The *first*, whether useful for edification or not, is simple in its doctrine, and Christian in its form; it is addressed to Almighty God himself, in the name of the one Mediator between God and man. In the *second*, the petition is still to the Most High, and the name of the Saviour is used as in the former; but here we have the prayers of the creature and her memory appealed to, yet not so as to imply that she had power to bear the petition herself, or to deserve an answer for the suppliant by her own merits. In the *third*, however, the latter ground of acceptance is introduced, and the sinner is led away a step further from the divinely appointed channel of mercy, to seek for help from the merits of a departed mortal; still even here the

name of the Lord is mentioned, though in unworthy connection with that of his creature. But when we come to the *last* collect above given, the work of alteration has reached its last effort: the prayer is no longer to the Hearer of prayer: the name of the Creator and Saviour is excluded: the creature is idolized and glorified; and a mortal occupies the mercy-seat of God. These curious circumstances may perhaps suggest the reason why it was necessary to alter the old Irish Offices in order to adapt them to the genius of the Roman Ritual; and may hint to us what sort of "expurgations" they were that were introduced into the Parisian Manual above mentioned.

*Of St. Columbkille's Character and Habits:
his Life by O'Donel and others, and his
Miracles.*

The preceding account of the life and death of St. Columbkille will serve in some measure to make the reader acquainted with his character, at least in part. But it would be a pity, in the abundance of materials which exist for supplying us with fuller information on the subject, to content ourselves with what has been already said in reference to it: we propose, therefore, in what next follows to draw our readers' attention to some interesting circumstances which tend to throw a light not only on his general character, but also on his habits in life, and religious opinions; as illustrated in the ancient accounts of him which have come down to us.

In the first place we may remark that some authors of the more modern sort have, in their zeal to praise and magnify this Christian hero, attributed to him a number of acts and practices equally unreasonable and improbable: they intended well in their way perhaps towards his memory, but such absurdities as they would father upon him, can never have any other effect than to render him an object of contempt with the more thinking portion of those who read such nonsense. A specimen or two of these fancies from a single page of Father Colgan's learned "Trias," will sufficiently explain the sort of things we point at. O'Donel, in his Life of Columbkille, tells us that the saint was so abstemious that "he would not eat as much food in a whole week as would make a single meal for one beggarman; and that he lived entirely on boiled nettles for some years towards the close of his life: that he was so set upon macerating his body, that he was constantly in the habit of torturing his flesh with whips and lashes till the blood would gush forth, and even till the flesh would be torn with them; and in order that the pain of the wounds thus inflicted should be kept the more fresh and increased, that he wore day and night a very rough horsehair shirt: that he used to divide the night-time into three parts, and spend it in the following manner; the first part he used to stay immersed up to the neck in cold water, until he would recite the whole Psalter of David; for the second part he used to continue in a sort of ecstasy, contemplating heavenly

things; the third part he spent in genuflexions, flagellations of his body, hymns, and spiritual songs; and that finally, on every common day, but not on Sundays or the more solemn festivals, he used to add to the exercises aforesaid, two hundred genuflexions, with ejaculatory prayers:" all which the curious reader may see described in the original at the 511th page of Colgan's Triad. &c.

But just think who it is that writes of all these things, and takes upon himself to make St. Columbkille accountable for pranks like these: why, no one else than Manus O'Donel, prince of Tyrconnel, who wrote his voluminous life of the saint in Irish in the year 1520, almost 1000 years after St. Columba had entered into his rest: so that his statement is quite good for nothing, unless we can tell exactly upon what more ancient authority he founds his assertions. And as for the folly and nonsense above quoted from his memoir, it is satisfactory to know that there is not a word about it in Adamnanus, nor in the other more ancient writers of St. Columba's life; though we may be sure that if they had known of such practices as O'Donel mentions, and regarded them in the same favourable light as he did, they would not have omitted to mention them, where they dwell on the saint's humility, devoutness, austerity of life, and other virtues.

But in order more perfectly to cleanse the memory of this excellent and holy man from the aspersions which would represent him capable of the modern sort of absurdities above alleged of

him, let us observe a little more nearly what sort of an author this O'Donel is, and how far his assertions can be relied upon. Let us hear then the account given of him by the candid Father Colgan, who takes all the above statements in good part, and regards them as very credible and worthy of attention; insomuch that he repeats them in his preface to the reader, thereby calling especial attention to them, without even omitting that preposterous encomium on his chastity, which informs us that he was so tenacious of the virgin purity of his mind, that he never willingly looked in the face of any woman, *nay not even of his own mother.* (See Colgan, as above quoted.)

After praising the great abilities, diligence, and learning of O'Donel, as well as his faithfulness in handling historic records; and after informing us further of the sources from which probably this author derived his information, such as the *Lives of Columbkille* written by Adamnanus, Camineus, Baitheneus, &c., Colgan goes on to speak thus of his own abridged Latin translations of O'Donel's Irish work.

“ Further we have thought it well designedly to omit here and there some particulars related by him, [i. e. O'Donel,] as having either been taken from apocryphal records, or else, if perhaps from accounts of real facts, yet so excessively exaggerated as to wear the appearance of fable. Among these were the miracles related of the hero Mongan: and also that long, diffuse history, running through several chapters, enti-

itled *Seachran clereach Choluim Chille*, (i. e.) the Wanderings of Columbkille's Clergy; and some other parts in the same style. For although we are well aware that the author of this life has introduced nothing but what he took faithfully from other histories, and that that account in particular which describes the errors, or erratic travels of St. Columb's monks, is of such antiquity, that it was not only known to our old writers, but that it was also composed in a very antiquated style, and as a distinct work, long since; nevertheless, as they appear to us to have been corrupted by the licentious alterations and comments of annotators and copyists, (who have to these marvellous relations added still greater marvels of their own,) to such an extent that is not merely the appearance of fables they exhibit, but partly actual fables introduced into the work, we have omitted these parts with a view to prevent the tares and darnel that have sprung up here from giving a suspicious or unpleasing character to the crop of pure wheat, which is, independently of them, in itself so grateful to us."

Such is Father Colgan's simple and honest account of this production, and of his way of dealing with it: and it is no wonder that Harris, in his Edition of Ware, (*Writers of Ireland*, p. 93, Dublin, 1764,) was led to conclude his notice of the work with this remark, that although "John Colgan hath omitted many of the relations in it, which he looked upon to be fabulous and apocryphal, yet hath

he inserted enough of such trash to give a reasonable reader a surfeit."

With this agrees the judgment of the learned Dr. Lanigan on the same subject; he remarks (vol. ii. p. 111) that O'Donel "has raked together a farrago of prophecies in his compilation, several of which are so nonsensical and evidently fabulous, that it is surprising how Colgan could have published such stuff." Elsewhere Dr. Lanigan notes in the same way, (p. 115) that O'Donel has "raked together a heap of uncertain traditionary anecdotes;" and (p. 240) that "we are not bound to admit miracles on such authority as his."

The whole matter plainly comes to this, that this Manus FitzHugh O'Donel is an author of no credit whatever, nor in the least to be depended upon, where his assertions are not proved from other records; insomuch that even his best friends are obliged to allow, that his word is no authority whatever for any statement. And now that we have thus dissipated his reputation as an historian, and gotten rid of the heap of rubbish thrown in our path by his compilations, we may proceed without further impediment to inspect the saint's true character as depicted by the more venerable and ancient historians that lived nearer to his own time: for as long as there was any credibility to be attached to the narrations of O'Donel, it would prove a most discouraging and uninteresting work, to go and waste time in contemplating the genius or practices of one who could be guilty of such absurdities as are attributed to Columbkille by that author.

At the outset of his work, Adamnanus gives us this account of the saint's character:—

“Devoted from his very childhood to the attainment of Christian knowledge and experience, and cherishing by God's grace, chastity of body, and purity of mind, though he lived on earth, he yet exhibited a disposition suited for the company of heavenly beings. For he was in countenance like an angel, pure in his conversation, holy in his conduct, most excellent in genius, and eminent for wisdom. He could never allow the space of one single hour to pass, in which he would not be engaged in either prayer, or reading, or writing, or else in some manual occupation. He was further so constant in the untiring labours of watchings and fastings, by day and by night, that he appeared to undergo in each particular work, what was beyond the power of any human being. And with all this, dear to every one that knew him, and constantly exhibiting a cheerful expression in his saintly countenance, he rejoiced in his inmost soul with the joy of the Holy Ghost.” (Adamnanus, Book 1.)

Cumineus gives a similar account of Columbkille's humility, devoutness, and austerity of life; his description is as follows:—

“But how earnestly this soldier of Christ endeavoured to cultivate the graces of humility and love, what pen can adequately tell, for bearing constantly in mind the precept of his master in which it is said, ‘He that would be chief among you, let him be your servant, he used to unloose the shoes from off the feet of his disciples, and wash their feet after their work in warm water, attending upon them like an humble slave. Often too he would take his turn at the working of the mill, and bring home the bag of flour to the kitchen upon his own shoulders. Moreover he gave his attention to fastings, and watchings, and prayers, and also to meditations on the Scriptures, preaching of the faith, and other labours of love, with an incredible degree of assiduity. And if ever he indulged in sleep for any time, he used to lie with his head reposing on a stone, and his body resting on the naked ground, with only a hide

between. And yet for all that he was in the habit of wearing down his body with such great labours, he was notwithstanding, through the gracious goodness of God, endued with such beauty of countenance, pleasant, rosy-complexioned cheeks, and good condition of body as were considered worthy of the admiration of all persons."

In these passages from Adamnanus and Cumineus, we have, no doubt, austerities enough, but none of the grosser absurdities mentioned by O'Donel: and yet it cannot be doubted but that if those early authors had heard of such things, and regarded them in the same light as O'Donel did, they would not have failed to notice them: it little occurred to them that it would be a worthy mode of praising Christian purity of mind, to represent a man as avoiding to look even his own mother in the face: for surely if "to the pure all things are pure," such treatment of a mother as this, so far from arguing purity of heart, would be an evidence that the very "mind and conscience must be defiled" which would receive injury from the look of a parent; so much for O'Donel's assertions in this respect, and as to his stories about the nettles, floggings, and cold-water cure, they are just as futile, and as little borne out by the more respectable authorities above quoted. Very great austerities are indeed attributed to the saint by those early writers, but no absurdities; nothing but what may have been practised by St. John the Baptist, and other early saints; nothing which can, when we consider the different spirit, genius, and habits of that age, and their wide disagreement from our own, be regarded as extravagant or senseless fanaticism.

But even with regard to Adamnanus himself, (and Cumineus in like manner,) it is needful to make here an important observation, which, though not meant to be in the least disrespectful to the memory of that worthy good man, is yet calculated to lessen in some degree the importance of his testimony relative to St. Columbkille. The observation we would make is this, that Adamnanus, though an interesting and valuable guide, is by no means in all respects a certain and infallible one, to a knowledge of St. Columba's character and habits. For as we do not wish to suppose that this ancient biographer of our saint wrote down anything but what he supposed and believed to be true, we are driven to the conclusion that he must have been of a very simple credulous mind, and too ready to receive uncertain or false narratives of miracles wrought by the saint, on very insufficient evidence. His book is almost a string of miracles from beginning to end, and many of them, if not the greater part, quite incredible: many persons of wisdom and learning would reject them perhaps wholly from a persuasion that miracles ceased to be wrought in the Church at a much earlier period than that in which Columbkille lived; but we will not take upon us to deny their truth on this ground; for even supposing that difficult question be thus settled in its general aspect, and miracles conceived to have ceased with the lives of those who immediately succeeded the apostles, it might yet be possible, that the divine power from which miracles originate,

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would vouchsafe the continued manifestation of them in the case of one chosen for so singular and remarkable a work as that for which Columbkille was appointed. And thus he might have been allowed to work miracles for the conversion of the Heathen, when other persons could not do the like. Some again might object to these miracles of St. Columba, from their being so numerous as to look like a waste and profusion of divine power, for no sufficient purpose in many cases; indeed they are so multiplied, and many of them so extraordinary and surpassing in wonder, as to appear to outdo the miracles of our Blessed Lord himself; and the writers of some of these miraculous narrations, (Joceline for instance,) seem to have aimed at this very point. But even supposing this, it would not seem a sufficient reason for rejecting Columbkille's miracles, or Patrick's; for our Saviour himself said, "He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do." (St. John, xiv, 12.)

But still, although the grounds above mentioned may be insufficient ones for rejecting these wonderful narratives, there is, independently of their intrinsic absurdity in some instances, a stronger reason for disbelieving them; which is this, that there is nothing to prove their truth; no eye-witness has recorded them. Adamnanus appears to have had no sufficient proof of any of them, but to have adopted with too much credulity, the idle stories congenial to the spirit of that

age which were then so abundant. His death took place in the year 703, more than a century after that of St. Columba, and the intervening period afforded enough of time for producing a copious and plentiful store of legendary miracles. Adamnanus does indeed give us in one or two places an account of the authority he had for the circumstances he mentions, and it may be supposed that those miracles which he distinguishes in this way are the best authenticated of the collection; but when we look to his proofs, they all come still in these picked instances, (about four in all,) to mere hearsay.

For instance, Columbkille is said to have prophesied of Ereneus, while he was yet a poor unpromising lad, that he should become very eminent in the Church; and so he did, as Adamnanus informs us, who immediately adds, "And he told all these words that were prophesied about himself, to Abbot Segeneus, in the hearing of my predecessor Failbeus, who was with Segeneus at the time, and from whom I myself came to know what I have mentioned here." (Lib. i, c. 3, Canis.)

Again St. Columbkille is said to have described to one Lugbeus the manner in which certain revelations of things going on at a distance, were communicated to him. Lugbeus, after the death of the saint, gave an account of this "in the presence of some other holy persons, from whom," says Adamnanus, "I have learned for certain what I have here told of the saint." (Book i. 23.)

Again, the monk Finan, we are told, ob-

served in a place where a battle had been fought recently, the waters of a certain spring discoloured with human blood. He came the same day to the monastery of S. Congel, and mentioned the circumstance, whereupon two monks there informed Finan, that Columbkille had many years before prophesied this to S. Congel, in their hearing. And Finan told the circumstance to Adamnanus. (ib. c. 31.)

Again, the death of St. Columba, we are informed, was remarkably revealed to a certain Irishman named Lugudius, in a monastery in his own country, on the very night on which it took place at Iona; and Lugudius told another named Virgnous of the vision which gave him this intelligence; Adamnanus, after describing this wonder, adds, "The aforeaid vision we have not only found mentioned in manuscript works, but have also heard directly from some well-informed and aged persons, to whom Virgnous had communicated the fact." (Book iii. 31.)

And these are the best authenticated of the miracles, prophecies, and visions of St. Columbkille, as narrated by his biographer Adamnanus. We may therefore safely conclude that the remainder are quite destitute of any sufficient evidence to prove their truth; and are only valuable as curious and interesting illustrations of the taste and manners of the age in which they were compiled.

Of the Views of St. Columbkille in regard to certain parts of the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

The certainty that miracles were attributed to St. Columbkille, which he never wrought, prophecies which he never uttered, and visions which he never saw ; and all this within a hundred years after his own death ; makes it appear just as likely that during the same interval, he may have gotten credit for doctrines and practices which were never his. In the account therefore of his doings and sayings given by Adamnanus, we must rather expect a true account of what Adamnanus and his contemporaries believed of the saint, or thought it for his honour and reputation that they should believe, than of what St. Columbkille himself did or said. Accordingly in the circumstances which we are now about to notice chiefly out of Adamnanus, full allowance must be made for the century between the writer and his patron saint, and that, a century perhaps not the least fertile in developing new features and sentiments in the body of the Church : we shall tell of Columba what Adamnanus told of him ; but at the same time forewarn the reader that some perhaps of the things so narrated apply more correctly to the age of the latter, than they do to that of the former.

We have already observed Bede's commendation of the followers of Columba, where he praises them for so carefully endeavouring to fulfil all the duties they could learn in the

Holy Scriptures: and how careful they were to study those Scriptures constantly, that they might know their duties, we learn more particularly from the case of Bishop Aidan, who was sent from the monastery of Iona to preach the Gospel in England, in the year 634. Of this Aidan, Bede informs us, "that all who went with him, both tonsured monks and laity, were obliged to spend time in meditation, that is, either reading the Scriptures, or learning the Psalms;" a practice no doubt derived from the excellent and holy rules established at Iona by the founder, who died about 40 years before. Of Columbkille's own regard and veneration for the blessed Word of God, there are many evidences in his life by Adamnanus, (see in Colgan; Book ii. 1; iii. 18, 23, &c.) and evidences also that he taught his followers to refer to the same standard for authority for their actions and opinions, (Book i. 22,) and this is only what was a striking mark and characteristic feature of all our old Irish saints in those days, as every one that knows anything of the original histories of them must be aware.

St. Columbkille and his followers also paid much attention to the work of writing out copies of the Holy Bible, or its different parts: for at that time there was no such thing as printing invented, and therefore all books had to be transcribed with a pen. Thus in the work of Adamnanus, (Book i. 23,) we read of his disciple Baithen coming to the saint, and saying, "I want to get some of the bre-

thren to come and run over with me a Psalter, which I have transcribed, for the purpose of correcting it." And we are further told that the work was so carefully executed, that the only error in it was the omission of the letter *i* in one place. We read also of a "*book of weekly hymns*, written out by the hand of St. Columba;" (Book ii, 9) and of other different books similarly transcribed by him (ib. and preceding chap., and chap. 29.) And the last work which we read of his being engaged in, (except prayer) on the last day of his life, was that of transcribing the Psalms of David. The beautiful 34th Psalm, at which he ended his earthly toils should be read by us with heightened interest, when we reflect on this interesting circumstance connected with it.

It is remarkable that while the Sacred Scriptures were in such esteem with St. Columbkille and his followers, we do not read one word in their histories about tradition or the authority of the Church. As for the traditions and authority of the Church of Rome, those they did not much regard; as appears from the fact, that when the Roman party in England wanted to force St. Colman to adopt their practices in 664, and obtained the king's authority to assist them, Colman, rather than submit, gave up his English bishopric, and returned to Iona; which he had left three years before, to go and take charge of the Church in Northumberland. (See Bede, Book iii. chap. 26.) But we have no room here for entering fully into all the quarrels that took place at that time between the

Irish and Roman Churches: these quarrels here alluded to were after St. Columba's time; but they shew the effects of his teaching, at least so far as that he did not instruct his followers to pay much obedience in controversy to the Church of Rome; nor is that Church, nor the very name of the pope once mentioned in the whole of Adamnanus's book. What a queer saint he would be with some people now-a-days that would pay so little attention to the "head of the Church on earth." It is to be observed that in the copy of Adamnanus, furnished to Colgan by the Jesuit already mentioned, in one of the additional chapters at the end, the writer, eulogising St. Columba after the narrative of his death, does make mention of the city of Rome; saying, that the saint was famous not only "through all Scotland, and Britain, the greatest of all the islands of the whole world, but even in Spain, France, &c., and the Roman city itself which is the head of all cities." The Roman city was certainly the head of all cities, as London is at present, for greatness and power, but this has nothing to do with the Church of Rome directly, and indeed the whole passage wears a rather suspicious appearance, and is probably an interpolation, as it is not in the edition of Canisius: but whether genuine or not, it is not of much importance.

From the passage of Bede already quoted, which mentions that Iona used to have for its ruler an abbot in priest's orders, who possessed jurisdiction over even their bishops, some presbyterians have derived the very unwarrantable conclusion, that the ancient Irish, and St. Co-

Ilmbkille's followers in particular, had no bishops in their Church, but were governed in something the same manner as modern presbyterians; if any such conclusion could be drawn, the more logical one would be, that they had indeed officers called bishops, but that they were an inferior order of men, and subject to the presbyters. But it must be quite evident to every thinking person that no such conclusion can be drawn. Bede says they had presbyters, and bishops, distinct from each other : and that by an uncommon arrangement, the abbot, though a presbyter, had a certain jurisdiction over bishops, probably in matters of discipline connected with their monastic rule, and not in such a way as to give the abbot power to interfere in the arrangement of matters connected with a bishop's diocese in general. It is evident also from both Adamnanus and Bede, that the distinction of the bishop's rank was known to the members of the community at Iona, and respected by them. For Bede informs us, that when the monks of Iona in the time of Abbot Segenius, were sending Aidan to preach the Gospel in England, and convert the heathen Northumbrians to Christianity, they took care to have their missionary consecrated to the episcopal office before his departure.—(Bede, H. E. iii. 5.)

To illustrate the same thing out of Adamnanus, we are told by him, (Book i. 26, in Canisius, or 44, in Colgan,) that on one occasion, having to celebrate the Holy Sacrament with a certain bishop, when this bishop out of humility wished that they should both "break the

bread of the Lord together as two priests, 'Nay, brother,' said Columbkille, 'May Christ bless thee; do thou, as a bishop, break alone this bread, as it is usual for one of the episcopal order to do.' " This anecdote shows clearly the reverence Columba had for that order, and the respect with which he treated it.

Archbishop Ussher tells us on the authority of the Irish Annals, that there was always a bishop resident in the monastery of Iona, who used to ordain their clergy and perform other episcopal functions. This may have been so, and the authority which states it is a high one: yet it seems strange, that if a bishop were so constantly resident in the place, he should never be so much as once mentioned in all the anecdotes recorded of the monks and clergy there by Adamnanus; who does not even give us to know what was the name or residence of the particular bishop to whom the saint owed canonical obedience. That intense theoretic zeal for the exaltation of episcopal authority which has been manifested in later times, does not appear to have developed itself much in the days of Columbkille; and they who would look for the perfection of order and ecclesiastical discipline in ancient times, must not hope to find their ideas in this respect much realised in the ancient Church of Ireland, until near the time of the introduction of the pope's power into the country in the twelfth century. In the early ages of Irish Christianity the limits of dioceses were unknown: the bishop was head of a monastery rather than a diocese: but what was

wanting in system and order was compensated for by zeal and love.

The evidence afforded by Adamnanus's *Life of Columba*, respecting the views of a future state, which were entertained by both these eminent men is most curious and instructive; for it plainly appears that neither of them had the smallest idea in life about the existence of purgatory, or the use of any prayers for departed souls existing in such a place: it seems a clear case, that they both agreed fully with the doctrine already quoted in St. Patrick's writings, that there are *three* habitations of spirits, heaven, earth, and hell, and no more. For Adamnanus mentions very many deaths of different individuals in his work, and he speaks continually of their departing to be with the Lord; or their condemnation to hell: but the possibility of any of them going to purgatory, or the existence of that place of torment, he never contemplates.

To illustrate the above statement by examples; in Book i. ch. 31, (*apud Colgan*) the death of Cailtan is expressed in the words, "he went to be with Christ the Lord:" in the next chapter, two other monks having died, are said to have "passed away happily and in peace, to Christ the Lord." In Book ii. 25, St. Columba, speaking of the murderer of an innocent girl, says, he assured that "at the same instant when the spirit of the murdered child ascends to heaven, the soul of the murderer goes down to hell." When the first death took place among Columba's followers at Iona, "Angels bore away the departed spirit to the joys of the hea-

venly country," (iii. 6.) In the next chapter, an Irishman named Dermot dies, and "is carried to heaven by the Angels;" and again it is said of him, that "he was brought to paradise by the Angel of God." The next death we read of is that of Coilrigin, a smith, of whom Columba asserted, that "in the same hour in which he was released from the body," "his spirit was carried by the Holy Angels to the joys of the heavenly country," (chap. 9.) Immediately after we read of the decease of a woman, whom the saint pronounced happy in her death, because "the Angels bore her spirit to Paradise:" and in the same chapter we are told that when her husband died, "his spirit too was borne away to the place of eternal refreshment," although the devils were fighting for to have possession of it. The two following chapters, (the 11th and 12th,) are very curious and interesting in connection with this subject, insomuch that we consider them worth giving to the reader entire, as they stand, as follows: premising only that the "Natal day," or "Birth day," of a Christian, was used in primitive times to express the day on which he died, which was the birthday of his life in heaven.

Adamnanus, Book iii. chapter 11,—“Moreover, upon another day, while the venerable man was staying in the Island of Iona, early in the morning he calls his servant-man, Diermit, whose name has been already so often mentioned, and gives him his directions in these words, ‘Let preparations be made without delay, for administering the Holy Eucharist, for to-day is the Natal day of blessed Brendan.’ ‘How is it,’ said his servant, that thou givest me directions for having the solemnities of mass so per-

formed to-day? For no tidings have reached us from Ireland of the death of that holy man.' 'Go now,' replied the saint, 'it is right that you should obey my bidding, for in the course of this last night, I saw the heaven suddenly open, and the choirs of Angels coming down to meet the soul of Saint Brendan, with such luminous and dazzling brightness, that the whole world was illuminated in that same hour.'"

Chapter 12.—"Moreover on a certain day, when the brethren were putting on their shoes in the morning, and getting ready to set about their different occupations connected with the monastery, the Saint on the other hand gave directions that they should have an holiday upon that day, and that preparations should be made for the rites of the holy oblation, and that some addition should be made, as on the Lord's day, to their little dinner. 'And I must to-day,' he says, 'though I am unworthy, celebrate the holy mysteries of the Eucharist, from a regard to that spirit, which has on this night gone up to Paradise, borne away amid the choirs of the holy Angels beyond the regions of the starry heavens.' And when he had said this, the brethren comply, and according to the saint's direction, keep holiday on that day; and preparations having been made for divine service, as on the solemn day [of the Sabbath,] they go to church with the saint. But so it happened that when in the course of their singing through the different parts of the service, they came to the chaunting of that customary prayer, in which the name of St. Martin is commemorated, the Saint [i.e. Columba] suddenly says to the singer, as they came to the place of his [St. Martin's] name; 'You must this day chant for bishop Saint Columbanus.' Then all the brethren who were there, understood that Columbanus, bishop in Leinster, a dear friend of Columba, had departed to the Lord. And after some time had elapsed, there came certain persons from the province of Leinster, who mentioned that the bishop died on that very night on which his death was revealed to the saint."

And to conclude our extracts on this subject, we may notice one case more of a death mentioned by Adamnanus, viz.: that of Enchat, B. iii. c. 14, who on his death-bed, "hearing the Word

of God preached by the saint, and believing, was baptized; and immediately full of joy, and assurance, he departed to the Lord, in company with the Angels who came to meet him." Now for a few remarks on the passage here quoted.

1. First then, as already suggested, it seems quite incredible that either St. Columba, or the author of his life, could have had any notion of such a place as purgatory; for if they knew any thing about it, some surely of all the souls above casually mentioned must have had occasion to go there. Columbkille himself, eminent as he was for holiness, was not without "some venial faults," even when viewed with the most favourable eye of an almost adoring biographer; while according to some accounts, he had still more serious sins to account for; and yet he and all the spirits above alluded to, are supposed after death to have entered at once into glory, and received the blessing promised to those, "whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." Nor is there once mentioned a prayer to help a soul out of purgatory in all Adamnanus's work. O'Donel indeed in his compilations on the Life of St. Columba, written some *nine hundred* years later, would make out that the saint was accustomed to such practices; and he tells an absurd story of one Breacan that had been drowned, whose bones came up from the bottom of the sea, and floated on the surface of the water, so as to meet St. Columba's eye, when he was sailing from Ireland to Britain, in order that the saint might pray "for the deliverance of his soul from the torments of purga-

tory ;" which he accordingly did, if we believe O'Donel, and presently after saw the man's spirit flying away to heavenly joys.—But after what we have already said of O'Donel's credit, as a writer of history, we need waste no more words in exposing this silly fiction.

2. Set forms of prayer were used in divine service at that time. For Adamnanus (cb. 12, above,) refers to one in which the name of St. Martin is mentioned, as being well known to his readers. The use of such forms from the earliest period is a thing with which the learned are familiar; but for the sake of more ordinary readers, the fact as thus illustrated with respect to Ireland and Scotland in particular, is worth attending to. It is observable that Archbishop Ussher (in his *Answer to a Jesuit*, chap. 7,) quotes a prayer from a Spanish Liturgy, in which mention is made of St. Martin, thus, "we offer unto thee for the spirits of the dead, *that are at rest*, Hilary, Athanasius, Martin, Ambrose, &c." (See Martene, *de Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, Bassani, 1788, tom. i. pp. 99 and 168, where a full account of this Spanish Liturgy is given.) St. Martin died in 402, and was the first of confessors who soon after his death was honoured with public notice in the service of the Church. (See Cardinal Bona's works, Antwerp, 1723, page 218, on the ancient Spanish or Muzarabic Liturgy aforesaid.)

3. The prayers of the Church were chaunted at that period; for Adamnanus says, "as they were singing through the different parts of the

service, they came to the chaunting of that customary prayer, &c."

4. The words, "*of the Sabbath*," appear to be spurious; for, first, the Sunday was never called "the Sabbath," by St. Columba, but "the Lord's day," as it is named previously in this very chapter, and as we saw before in the account of his death; the Sabbath with him, and in his time meant, as with the Jews, "Saturday:" and secondly, they are not in the edition of Canisius; the word he has is "*albat*,"—"clad in white," (i. e.,) "they wore white at prayers on that day, as upon a solemn (or holy) day." This observation is not favourable to the character of Colgan's edition, for accuracy or authority.

5. It appears from the passage above quoted from Adamnanus, (iii. 12,) that the monks of those ancient times were accustomed to distinguish the Lord's day, and other holidays and festive occasions, not only by spiritual exercises and religious observances, but also by trifling additions to their very moderate temporal comforts, such as adding a little to their frugal meals, relaxing their usual toils, and the like.

6. It is to be observed that in the passages above quoted, the phrases, "administering the Holy Eucharist," "performing the solemnities of Mass," "the rites of the Holy Oblation," and "celebrating the Holy Mysteries of the Eucharist," are all used to denote one and the same thing. The word Mass however was used to express the public Liturgy or service of the Church even where prayers only were

said without the celebration of the Holy Communion; as for instance in the case of that last public service which St. Columbkille attended on the night or morning of his death, it is called "the Vesper Mass of the night of the Lord's day," although it is altogether unlikely that the Sacrament was then administered. The name of "oblation," "offering," or "sacrifice," was very properly applied to a service in which we present and *offer* our alms, and above all ourselves, our souls, and our bodies, for a living reasonable sacrifice unto God. But there is not the slightest hint in Adamnanus that he used the word "Mass" to express an atoning sacrifice, a propitiatory offering for the living and the dead, as some now conceive it to be. (See Ussher's "Religion of the Ancient Irish," chap. iv.)

7. We may in the last place remark upon the above passages, that at the time to which they refer, offerings for the dead, and prayers in connection with their departure, were used in the Church. But we shall be very far mistaken indeed, if we interpret these expressions to imply masses for the relief of the dead in purgatory, or prayers for their deliverance from its supposed torments. For it is quite plain that in the cases mentioned here by Adamnanus, the departed spirits are supposed to have been carried into *heaven* by the holy angels; and therefore needed no ease from purgatorial torments, nor prayers for their relief and deliverance. The services therefore used in commemoration of their deaths must have been in-

tended rather as offerings of praise and thanksgiving for their happy passage to the peaceful rest of heaven, than dismal supplications to procure their release from the terrible pangs of purgatory. And such prayers and thanksgivings were common in the Church at that time, as for instance in the Liturgy ascribed to St. Chrysostom, used by the Church of Constantinople, where we find these words:—"We offer unto thee this reasonable service for those who are at rest in the faith—fathers, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, &c., and every spirit perfected in the faith, but especially for our most holy, immaculate, most blessed lady, the mother of God and aye Virgin Mary," whom no supporter of purgatory will imagine to have stood in need of prayers for her deliverance from that place. The anti-scriptural manner in which a fallen creature is here addressed in language properly applicable only to the pure and spotless Redeemer of mankind, is a point that need not be enlarged upon. (See Ussher's Answer to a Jesuit, chap. vii.)

To conclude this subject with one other illustration, we read in the life of St. Magnus, (which was written before the tenth century by one calling himself Theodorus Campidonensis, and printed in the *Lectiones Antiquæ* of H. Canisius, see Basnage's *Canis.* vol. i. p. 661, ch. 12,) that that, on the death of St. Columbanus of Bobio, A.D. 615, St. Gallus having received intimation of the circumstance, addressed his deacon Magnus in these words; "Get ready what is necessary for the administering of the holy obla-

tion, that I may celebrate the divine mysteries without delay : for after this night's watch I understood by a vision, that my master and father Columbanus had departed out of the miseries of this life to heaven : for his rest therefore I ought to offer the sacrifice of salvation." Here again is oblation for the dead, but no purgatory, no praying souls out of it ; only offerings of Christian praise and thankfulness ; for spirits gone not to expiatory torments, but peace and joy.

And now having done with the preceding extracts, as we are on the subject of prayer, it maybe suitable to remark next another important feature of Adamnanus's work, connected with this point. Every prayer that he mentions, and they are not a few, is addressed immediately and directly to the Lord himself. We may give here a few instances out of Book ii. In chapters 2, 4, 5, we have accounts of three miracles performed by means of " invocation of the name of God." In chap. 6, we read that St. Columba, " during his short stay at Drumkeath, when he went to the council of the kings there, effected the cure of the diseases of different persons that were sick, by invocation of the name of Christ." In chap. 11, the saint heals a fountain (whose waters had been hurtful to those who used them, " by invocation of the name of Christ." In chap. 12, we read that on one occasion, the saint with some of his friends were in great danger by sea ; a violent surge and storm beating against them ; whereupon he exerted himself

as well as he could to work the pumps with them ; but they said unto him, " what you are doing now is no great help to us in our danger, you should rather assist us by your prayers." He accordingly " began to pour forth his grateful and earnest prayer to the Lord," and relief was soon granted. In chap. 22, a poor friend of his having suffered heavy temporal calamity, Columbkille is said to have " prayed earnestly to Christ," that he would take the matter into his hand. In chap. 26, being in great danger from a wild boar, he " invoked the name of God" for assistance : and similarly in the next chapter; (27,) " by invocation of the name of God," he obtains the deliverance of a friend in like danger. In chap. 30, we are told that his servant Diermit was on one occasion, dangerously ill, and sick even to death ; and the saint came to visit him when he was reduced to the last extremity ; and " standing by the sick man's bed, he invoked the name of Christ, and prayed for him, saying, ' O my Lord, hear, I beseech thee, my prayer ; and take not away the soul of my beloved minister from the tabernacle of this flesh, while I remain alive ;' " a prayer which was answered and fulfilled, according to the account of Adamnanus. In chap. 32, we are told that he raised to life one that had died, " using prayer to Christ the Lord ;" and in chap. 34, being threatened with a storm, when about to go to sea, " he invokes Christ the Lord" before going on board. In chap. 40, knowing that a relative of his was in peril of childbed, " he

beseeches Christ the Son of Man in her behalf." In chap. 41, in order to reconcile a husband and wife that were at variance, he proposes that they "three should fast, and pray to the Lord," which proved a successful means of reconciliation, so that they ever after lived happily together. And finally when his friend Cormac was known to be in danger at sea, "and in fear and terror and tears with his comrades was praying to the Lord, who is a merciful and ready helper in adversity," Columbkille at the same time, causing the bell to be rung, and assembling the brethren in their church, told them to pray with all earnestness to the Lord for their brother Cormac who was exposed to great perils upon the sea: and he himself did at the same time "on bended knees before the altar, pray to the Omnipotent God who governs the winds and all things;" and Cormac it is said was accordingly rescued from danger.

Now with all these prayers and supplications to Christ the Lord which Columba offered on these different occasions, Adamnanus never tells us in one single instance of this eminent and holy saint using one petition to any departed saint who lived before him: nor is there the least mention of any other mediator, whose name was invoked by him, save the Lord Christ only. Let any one compare this with the modern legends of the Church of Rome published in these latter days, and they will see a wide difference. Let them read the *Glories of Mary*, and other such works, and observe how many

of their modern miracles are performed by the aid of the Blessed Virgin, and other saints, and let them look for any thing of the sort in the ancient work of Adamnanus; and they will look in vain: the very name of the Virgin Mary is not mentioned in his entire work; for he was plainly altogether unacquainted with the system that raises her to the undue position in which the fancies of a later age have placed her. He knew her indeed as one "blessed among women, and highly favoured," but not as an hearer of prayer, or mediator with the Most High: he knew her as a receiver, not as a giver, of grace; and we cannot think that he would have ever used that very improper and anti-scriptural salutation which is so common among us now-a-days, *Dia's Muire agad*, (*Dheas miraguth*, i. e. *God and Mary be with you*;) he knew better than to put the Creator and the creature together in this way, as if they were almost equal, and could give the same blessings: *Dia's Criosd agad* would have pleased him better.

Adamnanus then does not mention any invoking of departed saints, or praying to them, or to God in their name, as having been used by Columbkille, or in his time. He does indeed mention two instances in which persons called upon St. Columbkille to pray for them, *while he was yet alive*: (see book ii. chaps. 5 and 40, Colgan,) but this is evidently quite a different matter, and nothing to our present purpose.

It is curious to observe here, that in the three additional chapters at the close of the se-

cond book of Adamnanus, given by Colgan, *which are not in Canisius's edition*, there are some rare instances of prayer to saints, of invocation of their names, and performance of miracles by relics: for it is stated, that in a season of drought the monks had recourse to Columba's relics to procure rain; they brought "a white vestment of his, and books written with his pen" to a newly-ploughed field, and read his book, and shook the garment, and so brought down rain, (chap. 44;) and that on other occasions by prayer to him and invocation of his name, Adamnanus and his brethren obtained favourable winds instead of tempests that breathed against them; but these stories are so little of a piece with the rest of the miracles and prayers in Adamnanus, that we cannot help strongly suspecting them to be spurious, and should like to have an opportunity of cross-examining the Jesuit that gave them to Father Colgan, on the subject: even if genuine, all they would prove is, that prayer to departed saints, invocation of their names in prayer to God, and other practices of the kind, which Columba never used himself, and which Adamnanus does not attribute to him, were introduced in the next century after his death, and used in the time of Adamnanus: a time when corruption of doctrine was beginning rapidly to develop itself elsewhere. That the relics of departed saints were kept as treasured memorials of them by the Christians of those and earlier times is a well-known fact, as one may see from Bede's Church History: and

that the followers of St. Columba treated them with respect, and thought them worth preserving is stated by the same author: for he tells us that when St. Colman, a monk of Iona, left his place and bishopric in Northumberland, through disgust at the introduction of Roman customs, in the year 664, "when he was going home, he took with him part of the bones of the most reverend father Aidan; and left part also in the church of which he had been ruler, directing them to be preserved in its sanctuary." But although Bede mentions many cases of miracles supposed to have been wrought by the aid of the relics of various holy persons, yet neither he, nor Adamnannus, as edited by Canisius, inform us of their being applied by the monks of Iona to any superstitious purposes. (See Bede, H. E. iii. 25.)

The nearest approach to any thing of the nature of saintly intercession in immediate connection with St. Columba's own views, is to be found in the last words he addressed to his monks, in which after exhorting them to mutual love and godliness, he is represented as telling them, that he himself abiding with God, would supplicate Him on their behalf, and pray for both spiritual and temporal benefits for them; this at all events does not imply that they might pray to himself, or through himself, or that he could hear them.

We have already observed the use of set forms of prayer in the Church in Columbkille's time. Besides those however, which were used at regular stated times of the day or week,

it seems to have been a very common practice for the saint and his followers to assemble together in the church for prayer on special occasions of emergency, where we cannot suppose a precomposed form of prayer to have been provided or used. Thus we read that at one time "he suddenly addressed his minister Diermit, saying, 'ring the bell,' upon hearing the sound of which the brethren hastily assemble to the church, the holy prelate himself leading the way: and when there, bending his knees, he says to them, 'Let us now pray earnestly to the Lord for this people and our king Aidan, for at this hour they are engaged in war.'" (Lib. i. 8.) We are not told the words which he or they used on this occasion, but only that "after a moderate interval" they retired from the place of prayer with the assurance that their petitions were heard. At another time "the saint awoke the brethren in the dead of night, and having assembled them together in the church he said to them, 'Let us now pray to the Lord with all earnestness, for a fearful crime has just been perpetrated in the world, which it is to be feared may bring down some terrible judgment.'" What the crime was of which he spoke is told afterwards, but it is nothing to our present purpose. (See lib. i. 22.) Again, when the monks of Abbot St. Congel, at Loch Loedh in Down, were in imminent danger, "the venerable man, being at the time in Iona, aroused by some sudden intelligence, caused the signal to be rung for the brethren to assemble," and told them to raise their voice in

prayer to seek help for their brethren. (Lib. iii. 13.) And finally, we have another instance of a like sudden call to prayer in the case where Cormac was in danger at sea, as already mentioned. In none of these cases are the exact words of the saint's prayer given us; and in most of them indeed, except perhaps the last, it would rather appear from the manner in which Adamnanus speaks, that it was silent prayers which they used at such times.

St. Columbkille and his companions appear also to have made it a common practice to repair separately and alone to their church, for the purpose of enjoying retirement and private prayer; and this too sometimes at midnight, perhaps for greater privacy, or for the sake of the solemn stillness of the hour, and the many circumstances connected with it which were peculiarly calculated beyond those of other seasons, to inspire the mind with devotional feelings. So we read (Lib. iii. 19) that "upon one winter's night, Virgnous, being filled with fervent love to God, went into the church alone, for the purpose of prayer, when the others were at rest, and staid there for some time in devout prayer in a sort of recess adjoining the side wall of the oratory; and after an interval of somewhat about one hour, the venerable man Columbkille comes into the same sacred edifice." Adamnanus adds that when the saint came into the church, Virgnous observed a golden light streaming down from the height of heaven and beaming around him, so as quite to illuminate the little side aisle in

which Virgnous himself was; and shortly "after a prayer of not very great length, Columbkille again retired." We should remark that the miracle of the light here mentioned is one of those for which Adamnanns gives his authority; he had it, he says, from one Comman, a respectable presbyter, sister's son to Virgnous here spoken of, who attested the fact to him, having himself heard it from Abbot Virgnous, his uncle. "On another night also," we read that, "one of the brethren named Colgius came by chance to the church door, when the rest were asleep, and stood there for some time engaged in prayer, when all of a sudden he observed the whole church filled with heavenly light, the brilliant shining of which immediately again passed away from his sight: but he was not aware that at the same hour, St. Columbkille was inside the church occupied in prayer." (Chap. 20.)

To fasting as well as prayer the ancient Irish monks paid much attention: but their fasting did not consist in a mere distinction of meats, or different sorts of food, such as rejecting one, and using another plentifully, or putting away meat and taking fish, &c., instead, but they, like the early Christians elsewhere, used to abstain altogether from food in the early part of the day, and take afterwards only as much of the plainest sort of diet as they thought sufficient to support nature. Their fasting days, Archbishop Ussher observes, were two in the week ordinarily: viz., Wednesdays and Fridays: and that the former day was so

used by the monks of Iona, is mentioned in Adamnanus : but he gives us at the same time to understand, that they did not observe it so strictly but that for a reasonable or moderately urgent cause they would relax and dispense with it. For he mentions, that "once upon a certain Tuesday, Columbkille said to the brethren, 'We are intending to fast on to-morrow, being Wednesday, but however there is a troublesome friend coming to visit us, which will interrupt our customary fast.' And on the morning of the Wednesday here spoken of, one Aidan, a very religious person, arrived at Iona ; and his coming interrupted their fast on that day, as the saint had said." Venerable Bede likewise mentions in his Church History (Book iii. 5) that Aidan, the first bishop of Lindisferne, who had been a monk of Iona, "set an example, (which was followed by those of his time, both men and women, who were most remarkable for religious character,) of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays until 3 o'clock."

O'Donel tells us (Book i. c. 8) that Columbkille having one Saturday set out upon a journey, towards nightfall "heard the bell ring for vespers of the approaching Lord's-day ; and presently interrupting his journey for the purpose of paying the greater respect to the festival day of the Lord, he remained in the same place, allowing himself rest and holy quiet. For he made it a practice, in whatever place the signal for vespers of the Lord's-day overtook him, to stay, in the same place till the morning of the following Monday, unless some pressing necessity re-

quired him to pursue his journey." This is an interesting anecdote : but it would have been more so, had Adamnanus recorded it : coming from such a compiler as O'Donel, one is led to suspect that it is founded, rather upon what has been already related of St. Patrick, out of Joceline, than on any certain record of Columba's life. For this sort of writers, jealous for the reputation, each of his own favourite saint, is unwilling to allow any virtue to have shined forth in any apostle, of which his own is not partaker : still, supposing the account authentic, it is not to be wondered at, if Columbkille had received the practice alluded to from his predecessor St. Patrick.

It appears from the Annals of the Four Masters that a law was introduced into Ireland in A.D. 884, by Ananloen, the pilgrim, forbidding travelling on Sundays. (See Mr. Petrie's Essay, pp. 172, 173.)

There is a well-known anecdote of the great apostle of Ireland, which describes a vision that was seen by him, setting forth prophetically the decay of religion and corruption of doctrine, that was soon to overcast the splendour of Christianity in Ireland. Such a change did indeed come over the Church, and in the time of Adamnanus, if not sooner, strong evidences of its progress are discernible ; it is true that Adamnanus knew nothing of purgatory, nor of prayers for the release of departed spirits from pain and suffering ; it is true that he does not once attribute to his great patron any practice like that introduced in later ages of invoking

the Blessed Mother of our Lord, and the other saints, and it is equally true that he was unacquainted with the great mass of similar views and observances which have since been developed in the church; but it is also certain that in one important point at least, which candour requires us to notice, he does appear to have held views himself, (and to have attributed them to St. Columbkille in like manner,) and to have adopted practices, resembling more nearly what is modern and human, than what is ancient and scriptural. His statements on the subject of repentance and remission of sin in believers, will not satisfy a mind whose views on the same subject are derived from the teaching of the apostles and the written Word of God: there is at least an obscurity and apparent confusion on the subject; some sentiments clearer and more satisfactory; others very much less so.

Of the former description is that anecdote recorded (in Book i. 30,) of one who came to the saint in Iona, "exhibiting tearful repentance for a great sin which he had committed:" "he came and threw himself on his knees with weeping and lamentation at the saint's feet, and groaning most bitterly confessed before all who were there present, the sin he had committed. Upon this the saint shedding tears along with him, says to him, 'Rise up my son, and be comforted, thy sins which thou hast committed are forgiven; because, as it is written, *'a broken and contrite heart God doth not despise.'*" Adamnanus says that the saint had previously received an inti-

mation from God, that the man's repentance was genuine and accepted by Christ. Supposing this, it was but the Christian minister's duty to declare and pronounce that his sins were forgiven, and to direct him to the true source of comfort, the promises of God declared unto us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But other statements of our author are less clear upon this doctrine : for instance when one that had been guilty of enormous crimes came to St Columba (Book i. 22) and promised to show his contrition by submitting to any penance the saint might enjoin, the answer to him was this, " If with weeping and tears thou shalt live a penitential life as an exile among the Britons for twelve years, it may be that God will pardon thy sin." The man however died impenitent. The long term noticed may have been considered a lawful test and evidence of sincerity, but it seems out of all measure, and not in harmony with the sentiments of St. Paul upon a similar occasion, (2 Cor. ii. 6, 11.) The rest of the sentence, " it may be that God will pardon, &c.," reminds one of the expression of St. Peter to Simon Magus (Acts viii. 22) from which the words appear partly taken : but the air of the whole narrative seems to evidence too great a declension from the simple belief of the first Christians, to the lower views of their degenerate successors in later times. That only source of purification from all sin, the all-sufficient blood shed on Calvary for man's redemption, is, in the story here recorded, too much thrown into the shade.

There is one other story given by Colgan, which bears a little on this same subject. It is about a person who "undertook a long and fatiguing journey to come to Iona, for the purpose of blotting out his sins by pilgrimage:" upon whom St. Columba imposed, we are told, a penitential life for seven years. This story, however, is not given in Canisius, and is so unlike the general class of anecdotes given by Adamnanus, that it seems very doubtful whether he is to be responsible for it. It forms the longest chapter almost in Colgan's Adamnanus, (Book ii. 39.) However it appears pretty certain, as already intimated, that when Adamnanus wrote, the doctrine of the remission of sins was already beginning to be obscured, and errors on the subject becoming prevalent.

The sign of the cross was already at this time, very much used on various occasions, and extraordinary virtues attributed to it. In consequence of the hatred and contempt which were shown towards it, and all connected with it by the pagans, the Christians were the more given to use it on all occasions, and to introduce it into their ceremonies, in order to shew that they were not ashamed of, but willing to bear, the reproach of Christ. Adamnanus says, that St. Columbkille often made use of it for the performance of different miracles, such as the exorcising of an unclean spirit, (Book ii. 16;) the scaring away of a wild beast, (ib. 27;) and the forcing open of the gates of king Brude's castle, when that monarch had caused them to be closed against the saint, (ib. 35). The same

writer also mentions the use of holy water for miraculous cures, (ib. 17,) &c.

The corruption of doctrine that began to prevail at this period in reference to the subject of the means of attaining eternal happiness, is also illustrated by the expressions which Adamnanus uses (in Book iii. 9 and 10,) relative to the deaths of two individuals: one of whom, a smith, "by expending the profits of his trade in alms to the poor, did by the labour of his own hands prove a successful purchaser of eternal rewards." The other having departed this life, the demons were anxious to have his spirit for their prey, but the Holy Angels came and fought against them; "and by their aid and the help of the man's own righteousness," says Adamnanus, "the spirit was brought safely to the region of eternal rest." Filthy rags may answer for helping a Jeremiah upon occasion out of an earthly dungeon, but it was not from the "writings of the Prophets, Evangelists or Apostles," that Adamnanus was taught that they could help to save a soul from perdition after death.

The later Irish legends attribute to St. Patrick the banishing of serpents and other venomous reptiles out of Ireland. The same kind act was according to Adamnanus, (Book ii. 28,) performed for Iona by St. Columbkille; who gave the people of the island a lease of this blessing, "as long as they should keep Christ's commandments."

We have now nearly reached the close of the observations which we had to make upon the subject before us; and it seems extremely

probable that very few of any class of Christians as they are divided in modern days, will altogether like the account here given of the things we have touched upon. Some will be inclined to say, "Columbkille ought not to have done this, it is anti-scriptural and superstitious;" others may say, "That cannot be true of him, for he must have been a better Catholic than to have held such and such views." But I would remind the reader, that I have endeavoured to write down neither what he must have done, nor what he ought to have done, or thought, but simply and with all possible impartiality what Adamnanus, (who knew more of him than either my reader or myself,) says that he did. If any one else feels disposed to write a history of what he ought to have done, I have no objection: the only pity is that the Saint himself will not be able to see it; nor Adamnanus either, who might want hints of the sort still more. But after all it is not so much matter in one respect what he did, or what Adamnanus said; it may be, and no doubt is very interesting as history; still further it may influence many who would entertain an unlimited respect for the example of such a saint, and produce important effects in their lives; but however we may admire the holiness and virtues of Columba's life, we depend not on him for our example: having the original, we need not strive to imitate the copy: for our perfect model and example is still accessible, and "the writings of the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles," furnish us as they did him, with a perfect

and infallible guide to all that is of essential importance in faith and practice.

However much the senseless crowd of miracles collected by Adamnanus may tend to obscure the account which he furnishes of St. Columbkille's character and actions, it is evident from what precedes, that there is scattered throughout his work no small quantity of interesting matter bearing upon and illustrating the history of the saint. Other extracts might have been added giving further instances of the sweetness of his disposition, the devoutness of his habits, and the reputation which he enjoyed with the highest characters of his day. One or two such may be referred to as a conclusion of this long chapter. Accustomed to acknowledge God in all his ways, and seek His blessing as that which could alone make every enjoyment really valuable and comfortable, he would not partake of the sustenance supplied by the farm or the herd, until a benediction in the name of the Lord was first pronounced over it. And so we are told that every day when the new milk was brought home, before using it was always taken to him, that he might bless it, (Book ii. 16 :) and in the same way we have already heard of his going to the granary, in order that the store there laid up might in like manner be consecrated before its use. And when he expected that he should have to engage in business of serious importance, he would spend the night before "in sleepless prayer," in order that he might seek direction and bles-

sing from on high, (Book ii. 41.) He was therefore looked up to and revered by the most holy men of his time, and honoured by them with many honours. On one occasion we find the four eminent saints, Comgel, Canice, Brendan, and Cormac, all founders of monastic establishments, come from Ireland to Iona to visit Columbkille; and when they came to church on the Lord's day, they all with one consent selected him to officiate in the consecration of the Holy Communion, (Book iii. 17,) a part allotted to the individual minister whose character and reputation for holiness was greatest among his brethren, (see Book i. chap. 40.) With his own monks and brethren at Iona, he was regarded with the most tender affection and sympathy, and with such reverential respect, that when coming to present a request to him, they would kneel humbly in his presence: and when he was sorrowful, they could not bear to be ignorant of the cause of his sorrow, or of that of his joy, when he was gladdened with more cheerful subjects of meditation. (See Book iii. 22.) The more common method of salutation at the time was by kissing, as we see from the case of one who came to visit the saint. in Book i. 25. Of Columba's gentleness and readiness to forgive injuries, and return good for evil, we have a remarkable instance in the anecdote recorded by Adamnanus, (Book i. 41,) of one who came secretly by sea to rob the flocks belonging to their community. The saint having detected the thief in

his design, sent two of the brethren with orders to bring him into his presence, and on his arrival said to him, "why do you, in violation of God's commandment, make a practice of plundering the property of other people? When you shall have need, come to us, and you shall get what is necessary, for asking." "And saying this, he gave directions to have a sheep killed and given to the man, so as that he should not return home empty." Nor did Columbkille's generosity end here; for afterwards, knowing that the same person was near his death, he sent him a further present of a fat one from the flock and six bushels of corn as a last gift, which however only came in time to pay the expenses of the funeral.

It was customary for the monk's on entering the Institution at Iona, to take a solemn vow on their knees in the Church; (i. 32.) the substance of this vow is not given us by Adamnanus; but it involved no doubt a general promise of obedience to the rules of discipline observed in the place.

In latter ages, after the ninth century, a religious order of men known by the name of Culdees began to flourish; and many have thought that they were the descendants of the followers of Columba; but this is extremely uncertain. The name of Culdee appears to be derived from the Gaelic words, *Giolla De*, (i. e.,) *servant of God*; a name considered to be suitably applied to persons of their devout and religious habits. It is certain that besides the famous monastery

of Hy, there were great numbers of other institutions of the same kind, and churches also, founded by St. Columba, in Ireland, Scotland, and the Hebrides; Joceline says, that "Columbkille was the founder of one hundred monasteries;" and O'Donel, who seems to have learned his multiplication table to some purpose, amplifying here as usual, attributes to his patron the planting of "three hundred churches and monasteries." All the establishments which he so founded were subject to the government of that which was erected in Iona, which thus was enabled to enjoy for a long time great power and influence in all the churches of Ireland and Scotland; so that we need not wonder that Columbkille is called by the Four Masters, "the principal preacher, next after St. Patrick, and propagator of religion in almost all Ireland and Scotland." Among the churches which owe their origin to his apostolic labours, some of the most remarkable enumerated by father Colgan, are, that of Derry, (anciently *Doire-Chalguich*, and more recently *Doire-Cholum-Chille*,) which became an episcopal see, and still exists as such; that of Durrow in the inland part of Ireland, mentioned by Bede and Adamnanus (i. 3): Raphoe, in Donegal, which also became an episcopal see, but is at present suppressed, at least for a time: Swords, in the diocese of Dublin, and Dunkeld, in Scotland. The names of a great many others are enumerated, but they are less important, and it is unnecessary to notice them here. We

shall now direct the reader's attention to some interesting records of the history of Iona, after the death of Columbkille, arranged chronologically, (from Bede's History, and Colgan's abstract of the testimony of the Four Masters on this subject).

END OF THE LIFE OF ST. COLUMBKILLE.

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS
CONNECTED WITH THE MONASTERY OF HY ;
forming a
SEQUEL TO THE LIFE OF ST. COLUMBKILLE,
and containing an Account of
THE CONVERSION OF THE GREATER PART OF ENGLAND BY
THE MONKS OF IONA,
With Anecdotes illustrative of their Lives and Habits
from Bede's Church History of England, &c.

A.D. 563. St. Columbkille set out from Ireland on his mission to Scotland, and established the monastery of Iona.

572. Conal, son of Comgal, king of the Scots in Britain, who gave Iona to Columbkille, died in this year.

596. St. Columbkille entered into his rest on June the 9th.

600. St. Baithen, abbot of Hy, and successor of St. Columba, died.

601. St. Lasrean, abbot of Hy, died.

622. St. Fergna, surnamed the Briton, bishop and abbot of Hy, died.

630. St. Segineus, (or Segienus,) abbot of Hy, built the church of Raghery, (or Rathlin island,) off the coast of Antrim.

634. St. Aidan, monk of Hy, is ordained bishop, and sent into the kingdom of Northum-

berland, as a missionary to the English there, by desire of their king Oswald, who had been educated among the Scottish Christians.

History of St. Aidan's Mission to Northumbria

In order to understand rightly the very interesting circumstances connected with this mission, it will be necessary to retrace the history of the kingdom of Northumberland a few years back. That large and important division of the Saxon Heptarchy, comprehended, at the period here spoken of, beside the shire of Northumberland, and the lands beyond it to Edinburgh Firth, Cumberland also and Westmoreland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Durham. The extensive state so formed was divided into two provinces, Bernicia, which included Northumberland, and the south of Scotland, between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth; and Deira, which contained the other parts here mentioned; these two provinces were sometimes under the government of the same monarch, and at other times each had its own king. In 617, Ethelfrid, king of Bernicia, a cruel tyrant, who not content with his own territories, had seized also the kingdom of Deira, was killed in battle, and Edwin, the rightful inheritor of the throne of Deira, became possessed of the entire kingdom. (See *Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons*, book ii. chap. 4.) This Edwin was a very famous prince, whose character and actions are very like those of the illustrious Brian Boru, king of Ireland, as

recorded in our annals. For Bede informs us that he was possessed of wider sway than any of the Anglo-Saxon princes had enjoyed before his time, his royal power extending over all parts of Britain, and including the isles of Man and Anglesea. And so much did he improve the state of the country, and such tranquillity and order did he establish, that it became a proverbial saying in reference to his reign, that "a woman with her new-born infant might walk alone all over the island from sea to sea without any person hurting her," (Bede, H. E. ii. 16,) an expression, which with some amplification appears to have been transferred in later times to our own country.

Northumberland was still a Pagan country; the Saxons there and their prince were Heathens, during the former part of his reign; and for Edwin was reserved the glory of being the first king that received the Gospel there, and endeavoured to propagate it among the people. He was led to do this from having married a Christian princess named Edilburga, who was daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent. Her father and his people were the first among the Saxons to receive the Gospel, having been converted A.D. 596 by the Roman missionary Augustine: and when Edilburga consented to marry a heathen prince, it was on the express condition of having the free exercise of her religion allowed her, and also with a prospect of being the means of introducing the same into the Northumbrian realms. Her marriage took place in the year 625, being the ninth of

Edwin's reign. She was accompanied into her new country by the holy Paulinus, who was ordained a bishop in the same year with a view to this mission, which he entered on with much zeal and industry. Nor were his labours in vain. for after two years Edwin was at length induced to profess the Christian faith, and he with all his nobles, and great multitudes of the people, were admitted to baptism in the year 627. Bede says that in some parts of the country such multitudes flocked to the ordinance, that on one occasion when Paulinus accompanied the king and queen to a country-place of theirs, he was occupied for five weeks together from morning till evening, instructing and baptizing the crowds that came to be partakers of that holy ordinance. (Bede, ii. 14.)

“For six whole years Paulinus continued to preach the Word of God in that province under the patronage and favour of king Edwin;” but at the close of this period, disastrous changes occurred in the Church and State; for Caedwalla, king of the Britons, and Penda, king of the Mercians, two of Edwin's homagers, broke out into a rebellion, and gave him battle at a place called Hethfield, where his army was cut to pieces, and himself slain, A.D. 633, in the forty-eighth year of his age, when he had reigned seventeen years.

Penda and his troops were all Pagans; Caedwalla, though a professing Christian, was no better, as he was a cruel and barbarous prince; nay Bede tells us that the Britons of that day, who were the most ancient Christians

in the island, "had a contempt for the faith and religion of the Saxons," that were converted by the Roman missionaries, and that "they would have no more to do with them in any respect than they would with Pagans." Penda therefore and Caedwalla both used their victory with great cruelty, and reduced the kingdom of Northumberland to the most miserable state, torturing and harassing the people in a wretched way: while the Christians in particular suffered extremely in these troubles, and such as most zealously loved their religion had occasion to seek for safety in flight. Paulinus with queen Edilburga retired again to Kent, but his faithful and zealous deacon, named James, remained still at York, doing all in his power to sustain the faith and spread it farther where occasion might offer.

King Edwin having died in battle, his cousin Osric, (who had been converted to Christianity by Paulinus,) succeeded to the throne of Deira, the part of the country to which Edwin's family belonged: while Eanfrid, son of the late king Ethelfrid, got possession of Bernicia, the other province of the kingdom of Northumberland. It is proper to acquaint the reader in this place, that during the whole of king Edwin's reign, the children of Ethelfrid, with a great many of the nobility that adhered to them, lived in exile among the Scots and Picts who inhabited North Britain. The Scots here spoken of were the same with the Dalriedans or Irish colonists who had settled in that country; they had received the Christian faith al-

ready, and were subject in matters ecclesiastical and spiritual to the jurisdiction of the abbot of Hy. While resident in their territories, Eanfrid and Oswald, the two sons of Ethelfrid, were carefully instructed by them in religious truth, and admitted by baptism to the privileges of the Christian Church.

But Osric and Eanfrid were no sooner come to the possession of the kingdom, than they apostatized and renounced Christianity; and their influence, with the troubles of their times, was sufficient to bring back their whole realm to Paganism, and to extirpate the religion which had been allowed but a short period for taking root among them. The period of their government was however very short; Osric fell in the first campaign against Caedwalla, and within a year after Edwin's death, Eanfrid fell by the same hand. During this year, says Bede, "Caedwalla did rather spread devastation through the provinces of the Northumbrians like some cruel tyrant, and desolate them with tragic slaughter, than keep possession of them as a victorious prince:" but the end of his tyranny was near at hand.

For upon the death of Eanfrid, his brother Oswald succeeding to his royal rights, came with small forces against Caedwalla and his immense troops, and giving them battle at a place called Denises-Burn, he obtained a complete victory, Caedwalla being slain, and his army completely routed. Before the fight commenced, Oswald, who was a devout Christian, made all his army kneel down and pray to Al-

mighty God that he would in his mercy deliver them from their tyrannical enemy, and prosper them in the just war which they had undertaken in self-defence. The result of this victory was that Oswald gained the kingdom of both provinces of Northumbria.

And now this pious prince, being anxious to have all his subjects become partakers of the privileges of the Christian religion, sent to the *seniors*, (so Bede calls them, ii. 3, 5,) of the Scots, among whom he and his fellow-exiles had been admitted to the sacrament of baptism, requesting that a suitable person might be sent to instruct the Northumbrians in the faith, and administer the sacraments of Christ among them. The monastery of Hy, as being the chief seminary of religion and learning among the Scots, was the place to which the eye naturally turned as most likely to furnish a person competent to undertake so important a charge, and accordingly one of the monks of that place, named Aidan, was selected for the purpose: he is described as having been "a person of the greatest gentleness of disposition, piety and moderation, and one that had a zeal for God, though not entirely," says Bede, "according to knowledge; for he used to keep Easter Sunday on a day reckoned from the 14th to the 20th of the moon." This was a great point of dispute between the old Irish Christians of that time and the Saxon or Roman Church in England to which Bede belonged, as we shall afterwards see more fully.

It is said that before Aidan's coming to Eng-

land, there was first sent to king Oswald another of the monks, who being of a harsh and unpleasant temper, found his preaching little acceptable to the English, and therefore came back again after a short time to his own country, and reported at a meeting of the seniors, "that he had not been able to do any good by his instructions, to the nation to which he had been sent, because they were untractable people and of a stubborn, coarse disposition." Upon this there arose much debating in their council, as to what was best to be done; when Aidan addressing himself to the priest in question, said to him, "It appears to me brother that you have been rather too harsh with your ignorant hearers, and that you did not according to the Apostles' doctrine, supply them first with the milk of simpler doctrine, until being nourished by the Word of God, they might by degrees be enabled to receive more fully and practise the higher precepts of God." This discourse was very much approved of by the assembled seniors, who came to the unanimous conclusion that Aidan deserved the honour of the episcopal character, and that none was better qualified for becoming a missionary to the English than he, "and so ordaining him they sent him to preach" to that people. (Bede, iii. 5.)

Aidan having arrived at Oswald's court, requested that he might have his episcopal residence at Lindisfern, or Holy Island, off the eastern coast of Northumberland, which the king readily granted. By this choice of Aidan's it appears, that "he had no great re-

gard for Pope Gregory's regulation; for this pope in his directions to Augustine the monk, ordered the principal see for the northern parts to be settled at York, [where Paulinus had accordingly resided;] it is plain therefore, Aidan did not think himself under the Pope's jurisdiction. Had this been the practice or belief of the Scottish Christians, Aidan would never have altered the seat of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and removed it from York to Holy Island." (Collier's Church Hist. and Bed. i. 29.)

Oswald shewed a most commendable zeal and earnestness in propagating the Gospel among his people, and so actively did he engage in the work in person, that as Bede says,

"One might often witness there a beautiful sight, the priest preaching the Gospel, who had not learned completely the language of the English, and the king himself acting as interpreter of the heavenly word to his generals and ministers, because during the period of his long exile he had become thoroughly master of the language of the Scots, (i.e. the Irish or Gælic tongue.) After this many others began to come every day to Britain out of the territory of the Scots, who preached the word of faith with much devoutness to those provinces of the English over which king Oswald reigned, admitting them also to the privileges of baptism, at least such of these teachers as were priests. Consequently churches were built in different places, the people crowded together to hear the Word of God, lands and farms were granted of the king's bounty for establishing monasteries, the young children of the English were entrusted to Scottish tutors to receive from them the rudiments of their education, as well as instruction in more advanced studies, and in the system of regular discipline. For they were mostly monks that had come to preach among them."

Aidan himself undertook the charge of twelve pupils belonging to English parents whom he was to educate in the principles of the Christian faith. (Bede H. E. iii. 3 and 26.)

St. Aidan's character is depicted by Venerable Bede in terms of the highest praise:—

“What most recommended his doctrine to all persons,” says our author, “was the circumstance that he taught nothing else than what he himself and his companions practised. For he cared not to seek after or admite any of the things of this world. Everything that was given him by the princes or nobles of this world, he delighted in giving away presently to the poor that came in his way. It was his custom to visit every place, both of the city and country, going, not on horseback but on his feet, unless some extraordinary necessity compelled him. Whenever he saw any persons, rich or poor, as he went on any of his tours, he would immediately turn from his way to address them, and either invite them to the solemn initiatory right of the faith, if they were unbelievers; or in case they were believers would confirm them in the faith, and stir them up, both by words and actions, to alms-deeds, and other good works. And so much did his life differ from the indolent habits of our time, (i.e. Bede's time, A.D. 730,) that all his followers, whether tonsured or laity, were bound to employ themselves in meditation, that is, to pay attention to reading the Scriptures or learning the Psalms. This was his daily work, and that of all the brethren that were with him, wherever they came.”

For at this time of day,” (as Collier remarks,) “the Bible was not counted a dangerous book; it was not kept under restraint, or granted with faculties and dispensations.” It was on the contrary freely used by all, as far as the supply of copies, and the state of education made it possible.

To proceed with Bede's account of St. Aidan, he tells us that

“If the good bishop were ever invited to an entertainment at the king’s (a thing however which seldom happened) he used to come with a single clergyman or two, and after partaking of a slight refreshment, he used to hasten away speedily to reading or prayer with his brethren. After whose example, the religious people of that time, men and women, made it a practice all the year round, except during the fifty days after Easter, to continue their fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays until the ninth hour of the day. He never spared rich people on account of respect for them or through fear, if they had been guilty of any faults, but used to rebuke them sharply. He never used to give any money to the powerful men of the world, but only meat, if he happened to entertain them: but used rather to spend any gifts of money that were bestowed on him by the rich, for the benefit of the poor, (as we have said,) or on the redeeming of persons unjustly sold for slaves. Moreover, of those whose ransom he so paid, he afterwards adopted many for his disciples, and advanced them, when sufficiently taught and instructed, to the order of priesthood.”

The instructions and examples of the pious monk of Iona possessed a very great influence with the king himself as well as with the people; and Oswald’s piety and virtues are commended by the historian, almost as warmly as those of his friend Bishop Aidan. Nor was it only on account of his devoutness that he became illustrious and famous, but also for the extent of power and temporal sway with which God Almighty was pleased to exalt him more than any other of his predecessors: for he obtained dominion over all the different provinces of Britain, and the Britons, Picts, Scots, and English, became subject to his princely sway: not that we are to suppose him sole monarch of Great Britain, but that he was a sort of lord paramount, and received some kind

of homage or acknowledgment of superiority from the other princes. (*See Collier.*) And yet though raised to such a height of temporal grandeur, he was still generous and kind to the poor and the stranger : in illustration of which qualities Bede records the following interesting anecdote :—

“ It is said that once upon an Easter Sunday, just as he had sat down to dinner along with the bishop, and the hand was ready to be held out for the blessing of their meat, and there was served up before him a silver dish, full of royal dainties, at that moment his minister who had the charge of relieving the poor entrusted to him, came into the room, and mentioned to the king, that there was a great gathering of poor people sitting in the streets, who came together from all quarters, begging some alms from the king. Whereupon the monarch presently gave directions to have the meat that was dressed for his own use taken out to these poor folk, and the dish to be broken up into small pieces and divided among them.” (Bede, Lib. iii. cap. 6.)

St. Aidan's mission to England we may observe took place just thirty-eight years after the death of Columbkille. The shortness of this intervening period makes whatever concerns Aidan's life and character the more interesting to us, as showing what were the practical fruits, which at this early season began to grow out of the religious discipline and system of instruction established by Columbkille in the seminary which he founded at the head quarters of the Scottish mission.

About the same time that Bishop Aidan was sent into England, Pope Honorius wrote a letter from Rome to the Irish people, finding

fault with them for their not adopting the discipline of the Latin Church, especially in the matter of Easter, which was so much disputed at that time between the Church of Ireland and that of Rome. Honorius "judiciously exhorted them not to think their own little company, that inhabited a place at the very end of the earth, to be wiser than the Churches of Christ, ancient or modern, throughout the world, and not to persist in celebrating a different Easter from theirs, in opposition to the Paschal tables and decrees enacted by the bishops of the world." John, who succeeded Honorius in the Bishopric of Rome, wrote a letter to the same effect, displaying, as Bede says, "great authority and learning." But the refractory followers of St. Columbkille paid little attention to these letters, and adhered to their own way still. (Bede, ii. 19.)

A.D. 642.—King Oswald fell in battle against Penda, King of the Mercians. He died in the ninth year of his reign, and thirty-eight of his age. Various miracles are recorded by Bede as having been wrought by the instrumentality of his relics. His brother Oswy, who was now about thirty years old, succeeded to the throne, which he occupied with many troubles of war, &c., for twenty-eight years. During the early part of his reign, he had for partner in his royal dignity, Oswin, son of Osric, who succeeded to the government of Deira, and ruled over that province with great prosperity and happiness for seven years. Oswin was a pious and amiable prince, and greatly beloved by all his subjects: he

was also himself greatly attached to Bishop Aidan, and showed him much kindness. Bede records the following remarkable instance of the humble reverence and love with which he was accustomed to treat that reverend personage:—

“He had made a present,” says Bede, “to prelate Aidan, of a remarkably fine horse, which, although he commonly went on foot, he might use for travelling across streams, or anywhere else that urgent occasion might require. A short time after, there came in his way a poor man who asked for alms, upon which alighting from the horse, he directed that the animal with its royal trappings should be given to the beggar: for he was very tender-hearted and good to the poor, and like a father to the destitute. When this act of his was mentioned to the king, he said to the bishop, it chanced to be when they were just going to dinner, ‘Master prelate, why would you give away to a beggar that royal horse which it was meet that you should keep for your own use? Have we not horses enough less costly, and of other breeds, that would answer well enough for giving to the poor, without your giving them that horse which I had chosen especially for yourself to keep?’ To whom the bishop at once replied, ‘What sayest thou, O king? Is the offspring of a mare more precious in your sight, than one who is the offspring of God?’ With these words they came in to dinner, and the bishop indeed sat in his own place, while the king, who had come from hunting, went and stood by the fire with his ministers, warming himself. Then on a sudden, while warming himself, remembering what the prelate had said to him, he ungirt his sword, and gave it to his minister, and coming over in a hasty manner, fell at the bishop’s feet, begging that he would forgive him, ‘For never again,’ says he, ‘shall I say another word about this business, or judge what, or how much of our money, you shall bestow upon God’s children.’ The bishop on seeing this was greatly overcome, and starting up at once, he raised him up, assuring him that he was entirely reconciled to him, provided only he would sit down to meat and forget his sorrow. And when the king, at the bishop’s desire and

entreaty, was recovering his cheerfulness, the bishop in his turn began to grow so melancholy, as even to shed tears. And when his presbyter asked him in their native language, (the Gaelic or Irish,) which the king and his household did not understand, why it was that he shed tears, 'I know,' said he, 'that our king is not likely to live long, for I never before saw a king thus humble: Whence I foresee that he will ere long be snatched away out of this life: for this nation is not worthy of having such a ruler.' And not long after the gloomy anticipations of the prelate were realized in the lamentable event of the king's death, as above related." (Bede H.E. iii. 14.)

It occurred as follows:—After seven years of great peace and prosperity Oswin was unfortunately involved in war with his neighbour Oswy, and finding himself quite unequal to oppose such an adversary, he dismissed his troops, and retired for refuge to an earl, whom he supposed to be his faithful friend; but this man basely betrayed him to King Oswy, by whose order he was put to death in A.D. 651, the ninth year of his reign.

A.D. 651.—In this same year died the good bishop Aidan; within twelve days after the king's death, he entered into rest with the Lord.

In the same year also died Segienus, Abbot of Hy.

It is very well worthy of remark here, in connection with the death of Aidan, how Bede commends his character with the highest eulogies, and with what encomiums he records the miracles said to have been wrought by his means, speaking of him in the highest terms, as a man of God, and endued with the spirit of prophecy. And yet Aidan did not belong to the Church of Rome, but to that of Ireland,

which was then separated from her communion, and regarded as a schismatical body, cut off from the Catholic Church, by the Roman or Anglo-Saxon Christians in England. Aidan did not submit to the authority of the Church of Rome, but steadily opposed her decision in matters then regarded as of vital and fundamental importance, and for all this Venerable Bede, (who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Roman communion in England in early times,) never imagined that Aidan's soul was endangered by his differences with Rome, but on the contrary regarded him as a venerable saint and holy servant of God : for it seems it was not regarded in those days as essential to salvation, that a man should be subject to the Roman Church, or that there was no being saved out of her. Bede, however, felt it necessary to guard his praise of St. Aidan by an apology which gives an interesting account of his feelings on the subject :—

“I have written,” he says, “these observations upon the character and actions of the person in question, not that I can at all approve of or adopt his incorrect judgment with regard to the observance of Easter; nay strongly detesting it, as I have most clearly shown in the work composed by me on the times and periods of the world : but in the spirit of an impartial historian describing simply the circumstances of his own life, or those connected with it, and commending such of his actions as deserved commendation, and putting them on record for the benefit of my readers : such as his earnestness in cultivating peace and love, continence and humility ; his mind superior to anger and avarice, and able at the same time to despise pride and vain glory ; his industry in both practising and inculcating the heavenly commandments ; his constancy in reading and watching ; his authority, worthy of a priest,

in rebuking the proud and powerful, and at the same time his tenderness in comforting the feeble, and relieving or defending the poor: in fine, (to express much in a few words,) his being a person, as we have learned from those who knew him, that was careful never to neglect any of all the duties which he found enjoined in the writings of the Evangelists, Apostles, or Prophets, but strove to the utmost of his power to perform them all. These qualities of the prelate above-mentioned I exceedingly admire and love, because I doubt not that they were pleasing in the sight of God. But as to his not observing Easter at the proper time, either from ignorance of the right canonical time, or from his being influenced by the authority of his people not to follow what he knew to be correct, this I neither approve nor love. In connection with which point, however, this I do approve of, that in the celebration of his Easter, no other object occupied his heart, his devotions, and his preaching, but that which occupies ourselves; that is, the redemption of mankind by the passion, resurrection, ascension into heaven of the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." (Bede, iii. 17.)

Bishop Aidan having departed this life, after retaining his bishopric for seventeen years, Finan, another monk of Iona, was raised to the episcopal station in his place, "having received his orders and mission from the Scots," or Irish-Christians of North Britain. Finan built a cathedral church in the island of Landisfarne, which he constructed entirely of hewn oak, and covered with reeds. Afterwards, when the Roman Church obtained jurisdiction in the kingdom of Northumberland, Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury dedicated this church of Finan's, in honour of the apostle St. Peter, (as Bede records in his Church History, iii. 25.)

A.D. 654.—St. Suibneus, (Sweeny,) Abbot of Hy, died.

*History of the progress of the Irish Mission in
England during St. Finan's Episcopacy.*

A.D. 661.--St. Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, died. We have not so full an account of his life and character as is given of his predecessor; but enough however is on record to show that he was active in the work of his ministry, and was the means of propagating the Christian faith in a very large part of Heathen England. For during his episcopacy, the province of the Middle Angles, which belonged to the kingdom of Mercia, received the profession of the Gospel, and was the means of affording an opportunity for sending it further through the large and important kingdom of Mercia. This latter kingdom was still governed by the cruel and restless Penda, whom we have already mentioned; but the government of the province of the Middle Angles, (who occupied the county of Leicestershire,) was given by him to his son Peada, "a most excellent young man," as Bede describes him, and "one in every way worthy of the name and station of a king." Peada was connected by marriage with the family of Oswy, king of Northumberland, first by his sister Cyneburga, daughter of king Penda, being united to Alfrid, son of Oswy, and afterwards, on Peada's being made king of the Middle Angles, by his own marriage with Elflæda, daughter of king Oswy. When Peada asked for Elflæda, he was answered that she could not be given to him unless he became a Christian; whereupon Peada readily listened

to. the preaching of the Gospel, and was so struck with what he heard of the kingdom of heaven, and the hope of resurrection, and immortality, that he expressed himself desirous to become a Christian, even though he should never be given the young lady. He was therefore baptized by Bishop Finan, along with his nobles and soldiers who accompanied him, at a country place of some note called Admurum, belonging to the king. "And having received four presbyters who seemed both from their learning and character, suitable persons for instructing and baptizing his people, he returned home with great joy. These presbyters were Cedda and Adda, and Betti and Diuma, the last of whom was by nation an Irishman, the rest were English:" (Bede iii. 21) but they were all of the Scottish or Irish communion, and separate from that of the English or Roman Christians of the Heptarchy.

"These four northern priests, accompanying the prince into his province began to preach the word, and were listened to with readiness; and every day numbers both of the nobles and of the lower classes renouncing the pollutions of idolatry, were bathed in the font of the Christian faith. Nor did king Penda prohibit the preaching of the word even among his own people, that is, the Mercians, if they could get any persons to hear them." These things commenced a couple of years before king Penda's death; and there was thus formed an opening for introducing the religion of our Blessed Saviour into his important dominions, which in-

cluded Lincoln, Northampton, Rutland; Huntingdon, Bedford, the north part of Hertfordshire, together with the counties of Buckingham, Oxford, Gloucester, Warwick, Worcester, Hereford, Stafford, and Salop, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire. To Christians of the Irish Church were the inhabitants of these extensive districts indebted, under God, for their first conversion to the Gospel of Christ: the light which blessed Columbkille kindled in Iona and Albania was not bidden under a bushel, but scattered its rays farther and farther to the south, until its light illumined the very banks of the Thames, and penetrated into the darkest recesses of Pagan England.

Nor were the above-mentioned the only parts of England that were under such obligations to the Irish Christians of that day. The East Saxons also were brought over to the faith by the apostolic labours of the same zealous men. They had indeed received the profession of Christianity some time before in consequence of the preaching of the Roman missionary Mellitus, who was ordained to preach the Gospel among them by Augustine in A.D. 604. This took place under king Sebert; but upon his death, his sons who succeeded him restored idolatry, and forced Bishop Mellitus to quit their kingdom about A.D. 613. Nor was it until forty years after that they were again brought back to the faith of Christ. At the end of that period, however, (A.D. 653,) Sigbert, their king, being a friend of Oswy, King of

Northumberland, was induced by his influence to profess Christianity himself, and promote also the preaching of the Gospel amongst his subjects. Sigbert used often come to visit king Oswy in Northumberland, and Oswy showed his zeal for the progress of religion by taking care to improve these opportunities to the benefit of his friend, arguing with him on the absurdity of supposing things to be gods that were made with men's hands, and that the Deity is rather to be regarded as "being of incomprehensible majesty, invisible to human eye, almighty and eternal, as the creator and ruler of heaven, earth, and mankind, who would come to judge the world in righteousness:" by constantly urging these and the like truths upon his friend "in a kind and brotherly way," Oswy at length prevailed on Sigbert to receive baptism: which was accordingly administered to him by Bishop Finan, at the royal seat of Admorum already mentioned. And now returning to his own kingdom, he requested of king Oswy to supply him with "some teachers to convert his people to the faith of Christ, and wash them in the salutary font." Oswy therefore sent into the province of the Middle Angles for Cedd, already mentioned, and

"assigning some other presbyter as his partner in the work, sent them to preach the Word to the East Saxons. And when they had gone over all parts of that state, and collected a large Church for the Lord, it occurred that Cedd returned home, and came to the Church of Lindisfarne to confer with Bishop Finan, who having been informed of the success he had met with in the work of the Gospel, made him bishop in the nation of the East Saxons, having

called in two other bishops to assist him in the ordination service. He therefore having been thus raised to the episcopal order, went back once more to his province, and pursuing with greater authority the work he had begun, he erected churches in different places, and ordained priests and deacons, to assist him in the work of faith and administration of baptism, especially in the town called in the Saxon tongue Ithancester, and likewise in that named Tilbury, of which places the first is on the bank of the river Pente, the second on that of the Thames, in which towns he gathered a number of Christ's servants, whom he provided with the means of instruction in the regular discipline of a religious life, so far as such rude people were capable of it." (Bede H.E., iii. 22.)

The kingdom of the East Saxons, which was thus brought under the influence of the Christian religion, comprehended the parts of England now contained in Essex, Middlesex, and the southern part of Hertfordshire. Thus London itself was included in the portion of the island which was rescued from Paganism by the zealous followers of Columbkille.

Venerable Bede records an anecdote of Bishop Cedd, which is worth giving to our readers also, as it shows what a bold and faithful reprovcr of vice this prelate was, even in the case of kings; and also what respect and humble reverence he was treated with by the prince in whose dominions he was settled. The story is as follows. There were two earls, who were brothers, and intimate friends of king Sigbert. One of these two was engaged in an unlawful marriage,

"which the bishop having been unable to prevent or correct, excommunicated him, and enjoined upon all persons that would listen to himself not to enter the man's house, or

partake of his meat. The king [Sigbert] made light of the injunction, and having been invited by the earl, he went to his house to partake of an entertainment: but when he had left the place, the prelate met him. So when the king saw him, he presently alighted from his horse, trembling, and fell at his feet, beseeching pardon for his offence; for the bishop had also alighted, as he likewise had been on horseback. Being much displeased, he touched the king, as he lay before him, with the rod which he held in his hand, and solemnly addressing him in a tone of episcopal authority, said, "Inasmuch as you would not keep yourself from the house of that wretched and condemned person, in that very house you shall die."

He was afterwards murdered in that very place by those two brothers, who were instigated to this foul deed by hatred of the Christian religion, and of the prince who was so strongly influenced by it. He was killed, says Bede, "because he devoutly observed the precepts of the Gospel, but although he died innocent, yet a real fault of his was punished in his death, according to the prediction of the man of God." (Bed. iii. 22.)

In addition to his labours among the East Saxons, Cedd "used likewise frequently revisit his own country, Northumbria, for the purpose of exhorting" the people there. A brother of Cedd, named Celin, was domestic chaplain to Ethilward, prince of the Deiri at this time; and by his means, Ethilward coming to be acquainted with bishop Cedd, and being anxious to promote his pious exertions in the Northumbrian realm, gave him a piece of ground there, such as he might choose, "in order to build a monastery, where the king himself should come frequently to pray to the

Lord, and hear the word, and bury the dead." Cedd chose a place in a retired and rugged mountain, and being desirous to consecrate it for the sacred use intended, by fasting and prayer,

"He requested of the king that he would grant him license and permission to remain there for the purpose of prayer, during the entire season of Lent which was then coming on. On every day of which, excepting Sunday, prolonging his fast until evening, as was his custom, he then used to take no food but a very little quantity of bread, and one hen-egg with a little milk mixed with water. For he said that this was a practice of those from whom he had learned the system of regular discipline, that when they received a new place for building a monastery or a church, they first consecrated it to the Lord, by fasting and prayer. And when ten days of Lent were still remaining, there came one to summon him to the king. And he not wishing the work of religion to be neglected on account of the king's business, begged of his presbyter Cymbel, who was likewise his own brother, to complete the pious undertaking."

The brother readily complied, and as soon as the work of fasting and prayer was finished, he constructed the monastery, afterwards called *Lestinghæ*, and established in it the same rules of discipline as were observed at *Lindisfarne*, where he had been educated. (*Bed. iii. 23.*) In this monastery Cedd afterwards died of a contagious disorder which raged there at a time when he came to visit the place. This was after he had been many years bishop, and had watched over the establishment at *Lestinghæ* during its infancy.

About this time, the Gospel made a still further progress among the Saxons, through the instrumentality of the Scottish teachers, in

consequence of political changes which occurred. For Penda, king of the Mercians, continuing to make invasions and do terrible mischief to the Northumbrian realm, king Oswy was at length forced to take the field against him, after having made him most expensive offers in the hope of purchasing a peace, but in vain. The fierce Penda relied on the arm of flesh, and was elated with confidence of victory, as he had nearly thirty times Oswy's forces. But it pleased the will of Providence to put down the mighty and exalt the weak. Penda's troops were routed, he himself fell among the slain, and the Northumbrians were at last delivered from their furious enemy. And more than this, the kingdom of Mercia, now that its Pagan prince had fallen, appeared ready with open arms to embrace the Christian faith. Diuma therefore, whom we have already mentioned as one of the four missionaries to the Middle Angles, was ordained by Finan to be bishop over both them and the Mercians:—

“For the scantiness of priests made it necessary for one prelate to be set over two states. And when he in a short period of time, had gathered in no small body of people for the Lord, he died among the Middle Angles, in the place called Feppingham. And there succeeded to him in the bishopric, Ceollach (i.e. Kelly,) who was himself also of the Scottish (i.e. Irish) nation; who not long after left his bishopric, and returned to the island of Hy, where the Scots had their principal station, the head quarters of several monasteries; upon which Trumhere succeeded him in the bishopric, a religious man, and one educated in the monastic system, an Englishman by nation, but ordained bishop by the Scots.” (Bed. iii. 21.)

Bede does not mention in this place the cause which led Ceollach to resign his bishopric, but he did so no doubt for the same reason as that which influenced bishop Colman. Finan's successor, to do the same thing, of which we shall speak presently.

A. D. 664, St. Colman, bishop of Lindisfarne, successor to Finan, resigned his bishopric, and returned to the island of Iona, in consequence of the decree which made it obligatory on him if he remained, to adopt the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Church in England.

This year in a great measure brought to a close, under very remarkable circumstances, the pious and Christian labours of the followers of St. Columbkille in England; or at least destroyed their ascendancy and influence, and gave the direction and management of the work into other hands, after that these zealous and devoted men had been for thirty years carrying on their missionary work, with the greatest efficacy and success. The circumstances which led to the expulsion of the Irish party from their labours in Northumbria, &c., were as follows:—

Account of the acts of St. Colman, and of the expulsion of Columbkille's followers from the Saxon dominions.

The differences which existed in many particulars between the British and Irish Christians

on the one side, and the Anglo Saxon or Roman party on the other, were a cause of very serious and long-continued schism and dissension. The two points which were most warmly debated, though perhaps not the most important points at issue, were concerning the time of keeping Easter, and the mode of tonsure, or cutting of their hair, which the two parties adopted; and although these may now appear to us very trifling matters, yet in the remote times of which we speak, people thought otherwise, and regarded right views on the subject to be almost or entirely essential to salvation. The Roman party would not acknowledge their opponents to be true Catholics, and the others in like manner exhibited very great acrimony and harshness on their side, in defence of their own opinions. The Irish used to calculate the time of keeping Easter in quite a different way from the Romans, so that the two Easter Sundays would be sometimes a month distant from each other: and the former party again used to shave off the hair in front only, while the Romans shaved it all round, in imitation as they said of the Apostle Peter; but in what way he had his hair cut we cannot tell, as he says nothing about it in his epistles which have come down to us.

Now the controversy about Easter in particular had been much agitated in the Northumbrian realm during the days of the former bishops, Aidan and Finan. For there were several individuals in that kingdom who favoured strongly

the Roman system, and were very anxious to have it generally established, and a stop put to the contrary. There was first James the deacon, who had been left there by the Roman missionary Paulinus, when he fled from Northumberland, and this James used his influence to gain over as many as possible to his own practice. Then there was the queen Eanfleda, who followed also the Roman system, as she had seen it used at home in Canterbury, and she had with her a priest of the same way of thinking, from Canterbury, whose name was Roman. Moreover Alfrid, son to king Oswy, favoured also the Roman customs, on account of his having been educated by the learned Wilfrid, a Saxon, who had gone to Rome to complete his own education.

Hence it came to pass in consequence of the different ways of calculating their great festival, that on some occasions, after the king had ended his fasting days and was keeping Easter, the queen was only at her Palm Sunday, and still having more of the fast to proceed with.

During the lifetime of bishops Aidan and Finan, this controversy ran on without coming to any head, every one following undisturbed the practice he preferred :—

“Every body,” says Bede, “knew very well that although Aidan could not keep the Paschal festival differently from the practice of those who sent him, yet he was diligent and careful in performing the works of faith, piety, and love, after the manner followed by all persons of religious character. For which reason he was deservedly loved by all, even by those who held a different opinion about the festival of Easter. And he was looked up to with a degree of

respect, not only by people of the middle classes, but also by the bishops themselves, Honorius, of Canterbury, and Felix, of the East Angles."

And therefore in Aidan's time the Roman party could scarce hope to prevail in a public controversy against one so influential. During Finan's episcopacy, an Irishman named Ronan, that had been educated in France or Italy, fought hard for the Roman rites, and prevailed on many to adopt them, but had little success in attempting to persuade bishop Finan, who being of a fierce disposition, as Bede says, was only made the "more bitter" and determined in his opposition by Ronan's arguments. At length in the time of Colman, the controversy ran so high that people were greatly excited by it, "dreading lest after having received the name of Christians they should run, or had run in vain," so much importance did they attach to the question at issue: and some means appeared necessary for terminating the contention.

It was therefore arranged that a synod should be held to consider the matter in the monastery of Streaneshal or Whitby, which was at that time governed by the saintly Abbess Hilda. And accordingly there came together such as were most influential and esteemed in Church and State, in order that they might in some way settle the question. The Abbess, who belonged to the Scottish communion, acted as moderatress in the Council; king Oswy having been educated among the Scots, was also on the same side; and bishop Colman likewise, who was the chief advocate of the Irish Easter on the

occasion. Also bishop Cedd, already mentioned, who had been ordained by the Scots; he acted as interpreter between both parties in their conference. On the other side were arrayed persons scarcely less eminent; for there was Alfrid, son to king Oswy, whose tutor, Wilfrid, had inspired him with a love for the Roman customs; and Wilfrid, himself a priest, and afterwards bishop; James the deacon, and priest Romanus, attended on the same side; and Agilbert, bishop of the West Saxons, accompanied by his priest Agatbo, were also of their party. Agilbert was educated in Ireland, and was afterwards bishop of Paris.

King Oswy opened the proceedings with a speech, in which he set forth the necessity of uniformity amongst Christians, and concluded by calling upon bishop Colman to explain the Irish Easter, upon which Cólman spoke as follows:—

“This Easter,” says he, “which I am accustomed to observe, “I have received from my seniors, who sent me hither as bishop, which all our fathers, men beloved of God, are known to have celebrated after the same manner: which, that it may not seem to any one worthy of being regarded with contempt and censure, is the very same that the blessed evangelist St. John, the disciple specially beloved by the Lord, with all the churches over which he ruled, is known to have celebrated.”

After Colman had made these and other like observations, the king desired Agilbert to explain his views, but he begged to be excused as not being sufficiently master of the English tongue, and requested that Wilfrid might speak

instead; and the king accordingly gave permission.

Wilfrid then began as follows:—

“Our Easter,” says he, “is what we have seen celebrated by all the people at Rome, where the blessed apostles Peter and Paul lived, taught, suffered, and were buried; this we have seen used by all the people in Italy; this in Gaul, which we came to for the purpose of either study or prayer; this we found followed throughout Africa, Asia, Ægypt, Greece, and all the world, wherever the Church of Christ is spread abroad, through divers nations and tongues, in one and the same order of time, excepting only these [i.e. the Irish] and the partners of their obstinacy, the Picts and Britons, with whom, out of the two most remote isles of the world, and not even the whole of these, they are, with foolish labour, fighting against the entire world.”

Much more was said on both sides at the council; Colman still pleading the authority of St. John and Columbkille; and Wilfrid, urging that of St. Peter, and the practice of all the world. The latter in fine said, “Granting that your Columbkille, nay ours too, if he were Christ’s, was ever so holy and eminent for his virtues, could he, after all, be preferred to the most blessed prince of the apostles, to whom the Lord said, ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’” The king then asked Colman was it true that the Lord said this to Peter, and Colman said, “True, O king.” Then said the king, “Was any such power given to Columbkille?” and he said, “Nay.” Then said the king, “If this

be so, I am determined not to contradict this door-keeper, lest when I come to the gate of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open, if he were angry with me, who is proved to hold the keys." And so, the assembly following the king's opinion, the Irish customs were condemned, and the Roman established in the realm of Northumberland by the king's authority (All which is from Bede, iii. 25.)

And now bishop "Colman perceiving that his doctrine was despised and his sect looked down upon, took with him such as would follow him, that is, such as would not receive the Catholic Easter and tonsure of the crown," and returned into the Scots' country. Tuda, who was ordained bishop by the southern Scots, and adopted the Roman Easter, was appointed bishop in his place. Bishop Cedd conformed to the Roman Easter, and therefore was left in possession of his see, to which he returned after the council of Whitby. The Scottish monks also that were at Ripon, in Yorkshire, "being given their choice, preferred leaving their place, rather than adopt the Catholic Easter and other canonical rites, according to the custom of the Roman and Apostolic Church," as Bede informs us (lib. v. 20). The brethren who were willing to remain in the church of Lindisfarne after the departure of the Irish, had a new head appointed over them named Eata; he was one of the twelve pupils of St. Aidan, already mentioned, and was at this time Abbot of Melrose Abbey. His appointment to the charge of the brethren at Lindis-

farne was owing to Colman's influence with king Oswy; for Oswy loved Colman greatly on account of his remarkable wisdom.

The changes made in the Church of Northumbria at this time, generally speaking, were prudently managed so as to give the least offence possible, and so as to conciliate the followers of the Irish missionaries. Such an appointment was that of Eata, and that of Trumhere, as bishop of Mercia, when Ceollach resigned; Trumhere, though an Englishman, having had much intercourse with the Irish, and having been educated and ordained by them, though not by those of them who were recently involved in the controversy with Rome about Easter.

These changes took place, as has been said, thirty years after the first mission from Iona to England. Aidan governed the Northumbrian Church for seventeen years; Finan for ten; and Colman for three. And now after these faithful men had so long borne the burden and heat of the day, and been so blessed in their apostolic labours, they were thrust out, and through the influence of Rome other men entered into their labours, and possessed themselves of that ecclesiastical influence and authority which had been so well earned by the laborious and zealous missionaries from Iona.

But even here, the benefits conferred upon England by the followers of St. Columba were not yet to cease their operations: many of the disciples of the original missionaries still continued to labour effectively among their country-

men in the work of the ministry, and some of these became very famous for their zeal and devotedness in the service of Christ; as for instance the celebrated St. Cuthbert, bishop of Landisfarne, who entered that monastery under Abbot Eata, and afterwards became very distinguished in the Church: his life was written by Bede. He was as some say, an Irishman, born at Kilmacud, near Dublin, (see Sir J. Ware on the Writers of Ireland,) the church of which is called after him.

Bede gives us a very high character of bishop Colman, and those who preceded him in Northumbria:—

“How great was his frugality and continence, and that of his predecessors, might be judged,” says this historian, “even from the place over which he ruled, where, after their departure very few houses were found besides the church, that is to say, only such as were absolutely necessary for carrying on the intercourse of civilised life. They had no money except their cattle. For if they ever received any money from the rich, they used to give it away presently to the poor. For they had no occasion for collecting money, or providing houses to entertain the great ones of this world, who used never come to their church for any other purpose but only for prayer and hearing the Word of God. The king himself, when he had occasion to be there, used to come accompanied by only five or six followers, and used to retire as soon as prayer was over in the church. And if it should so happen that they would take any refreshment there, they contented themselves with nothing beyond the simple and daily food of the brethren, and sought nothing more. For at that time the whole anxiety of those teachers was to serve God, and not the world; their whole care was occupied in cultivating the heart, and not the stomach. For which reason also the habit of religion was also respected in those days, so that whenever any clergyman or monk would come, he

was received with a cordial welcome by all classes, as a servant of God, and if he were to be found travelling on his journey, they would come running to him and be quite happy to be laid hands on by him, or receive a blessing from his lips : they used also to give diligent heed to their words of exhortation ; and on the Lord's days they flocked together eagerly to the church or to the monasteries, not with a view to refreshing their bodies, but desirous to learn the Word of God : and if any of the priests happened to come into a village, the townspeople there would congregate together, and be sure to ask him to instruct them in the Word of life. For those priests, or clergymen, had no other cause for visiting the towns, than to preach, baptize, visit the sick, or in short to attend to the cure of souls ; being so free from every taint of avarice that they would not even receive territories and possessions for building monasteries, unless when forced to it by the secular powers. Which system, in all respects, was continued in the churches of the Northumbrians for some time after the period of which we now speak." (Bede H.E., iii. 26.)

After Colman's departure, Wilfrid was raised to the episcopal rank, being promoted by king Alfred to the bishopric of York. He used his great influence in promoting more effectually the system to which he had attached himself, and extending the authority of the Roman Church in England, the consequence of which, Bede says, was, that "the Catholic system gained ground daily, and all the Scots [or Irish] that were resident among the English, either submitted to them or went back to their own country." (Bede, iii. 28.) Wilfrid had such a bad opinion of the orders and discipline of the Scottish clergy, that, not allowing them to be good Catholics, he refused to take episcopal consecration from them, and went all the way to Paris, to bishop Agilbert, to be ordained.

bishop by him. For at this time, according to Bede, "in all Britain there was not one canonically ordained bishop, except Wini, bishop of the West Saxons," all the rest being more or less contaminated by connection with the Irish and British Christians, whose orders appear to have been regarded as so unsatisfactory : a striking proof of the wide influence and successful issue which the labours of Columba's followers had before this time met with in England. To provide canonical orders according to the ideas of the Roman party, they soon after sent one Vighard "to Rome to be ordained, that he might receive the order of archbishop, and be able to ordain prelates for the Catholic Churches throughout all Britain." Vighard, however, died at Rome before his consecration took place. (Bede iii. 29.) And instead of him, Theodore, *a learned monk, of Tarsus, in Cilicia*, who was in Rome at the time, was sent to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Chad, brother of Cedd, who had been consecrated bishop by Wini and two British bishops, was regarded by him as uncanonically ordained, and therefore Theodore "himself performed his ordination anew according to the Catholic system." (Bede iv. 1.)

It remains for us now to give the reader, in Bede's words, an account of the history of Bishop Colman after his departure from Northumberland :—

"Leaving Britain, he took with him all the Scottish monks that he had gathered in the island of Lindisfarne, and likewise about thirty persons of the English nation, who were also educated in the system of monastic life.

And having left some brethren in his own church, he came first to the island of Hy, from which he had been sent to preach the Word of God to the English nation. He afterwards removed to a certain small island far away off the western coast of Ireland, named Inisbofin, that is, *the island of the white cow*. Arriving in this, therefore, he built a monastery, and placed in it the monks that he had brought with him, collected out of both nations; who not being able to agree with one another, because the Irish used in the summer time, when the corn was to be gathered in, leave the monastery and wander about straggling through the places with which they were familiar, and when winter was coming on, would return and want to have their share of what the Englishmen had stored in the meantime: Colman, therefore, sought for some way of remedying this dissension, and so travelling about all places, far and near, he found a place in the island of Ireland well suited for building a monastery, which in the tongue of the Scottish people is called Mayo, and he bought a part of it that was not very large from the earl to whose property it belonged, this condition being part of the agreement, that the monks who were to reside there should constantly offer prayers to the Lord for him who supplied them with the ground. And having soon built the monastery, with the aid of the earl and all the neighbours, he settled the Englishmen there, leaving the Scottish monks in the island above-mentioned. And this monastery is still (A.D. 731) occupied by Englishmen." (Bede, iv. 4.)

It appears from this account that some of the Scottish monks whom Colman had with him in the Island of Landisfarne, were Irishmen from the province of Connaught. For he distinguishes them from the English, as being familiar with the parts of the country near their monastery at Inisbofin. And now to proceed with our short annals of Iona.

A.D. 658.—St. Cumineus, Abbot of Hy, died on Feb. 21.

A.D. 677.—St. Failbeus, Abbot of Hy, died. He went to Ireland in 671, and returned to Britain in 674.

A.D. 684.—St. Adamnanus, Abbot of Hy, visited the Northumbrian Anglo-Saxons, as ambassador, to seek the recovery of plunder and captives which the Northumbrians had taken away from Scotland. His mission proved a successful one.

A.D. 703.—Adamnanus, Abbot of Hy-Cholum-Cille, died. He was a very learned and eminent man, and was author of the *Life of St. Columba*, so often mentioned already; also of other works, such as a description of the Holy Land, which he presented to king Alfrid, probably on occasion of the mission above noticed. He was in Bede's words, "most nobly instructed in the knowledge of the Scriptures." Bede also mentions that when he came on the above business to king Alfred, and staid some time in his province among the Saxons there, "he saw the canonical rites of the Church duly performed, and was prudently admonished by several of those that were better instructed, that he ought not to presume to live in opposition to the universal practice of the Church, whether in the observation of Easter, or any other arrangements, when there were so very few on his side, and they situated in such a remote corner of the world." Adamnanus was, by these advisers, persuaded to adopt the Roman rites, and so embracing the system warmly and cordially, he did all in his power to prevail on his friends in Hy, and all who were subject to that monastery, to do the same, but with no success. "He therefore sailed into Ireland," as Bede further mentions,

“and preaching to the inhabitants, and setting before them, with modest exhortations, the lawful mode of calculating Easter, he induced very many, and almost all such as were independent of the control of the monks of Hy, to forsake their errors, and return to Catholic unity.” Then after celebrating Easter canonically in Ireland he returned to Hy, and renewed his arguments with the monks there, but again to no purpose. Before another Easter came round, he departed this life, “Providence so ordering it,” as Bede says, “that a man so eminently studious of unity and peace should be snatched away into eternal life before that the return of the Paschal season should force him to be involved in more serious discussion with those who would not follow him in the truth.” (Bede v. 16.)

A.D. 716.—Passing over the names of some intervening abbots, who are not in any way very remarkable, little besides their names remaining of them; this year brings us to the death of Abbot Dunchad, whose government is notable as having been that during which the monks of Hy first received the Roman Easter, being persuaded so to do by the preaching of Egbert, a famous English priest who came to visit them. He remained in Hy thirteen years, and died on Easter Sunday, April 24, 729, after having celebrated the service of that festival day.

A.D. 765.—Niall, son of Fergal, king of Ireland, abdicating his throne, retired to the Isle of Hy, where he died in the eighth year

of his sojourning there (according to the Four Masters).

A.D. 778.—Artgal, son of Cathal, king of Connaught, abdicating his throne, became a monk, and retired to Hy, where he died in 786.

A.D. 797.—Hy-Columb-kille is burned by foreign pirates (*Four Masters*). This is the first mention of Danish depredations in Iona, noticed by Colgan.

A.D. 801.—Hy is burned again, and many of the family (i.e. the monks) perish in the flames, by the hands of the pirates.

A.D. 816.—Diermit, Abbot of Hy, went into Scotland with the scrines of St. Columbkille. A scrine is a desk or chest for keeping important documents, sacred relics, or the like. (See *Du Cange's Glossary*.)

A.D. 823.—St. Blathmac, son of Flan, Abbot of Hy, is murdered by the Normans or Danes in the island.

A.D. 875.—The scrine of St. Columbkille is brought into Ireland, to prevent its falling into the hands of the Danes. From this scrine, possibly, according to Colgan, the Church of Skryne, in Meath, was so named. (See the 'Trias,' p. 875.)

A.D. 985.—Iona is plundered and laid waste on Christmas night by the Nortmans, who murdered the abbot and fifteen of the seniors of the place.

A.D. 986.—The Nortmans or Danes, who came to pillage the Isle of Hy, met with a great slaughter, in which three hundred and sixty of them were killed.

A.D. 989.—Anlave, son of Sitric, prince of the Nortmans, after the battle of Tarah, (in which the Nortmans got a terrible beating from Malachy, son of Donald, who was subsequently king of Ireland,) retired to the island of Hy, where he died afterwards.

END OF THE CHRONICLE OF HY.



ST BRIDGET.

THE LIFE OF ST. BRIDGET



Her History.

St. Bridget's history is involved in much more obscurity than that of either of the two saints whose lives have been given in the former part of this work. Whatever darkness may overhang much of St. Columbkille's history, there is still enough of it clearly described and sufficiently well authenticated, to form an interesting and connected narrative. With regard to St. Patrick the case is somewhat different; there are a large number of facts sufficiently credible and abundantly proved by historic testimony, in connection with his name, and many of these are of great interest, but the records of his life which have reached us are in great part so imperfect and mutilated, that there is the greatest difficulty in ascertaining to which of the individuals who bore the name of Patrick, and who flourished and were eminent for their labours in the infancy of the Irish Church, many of the circumstances and acts recorded are to be appropriated, whether to Patrick, commonly called the Apostle of Ireland, or to another venerable and still more ancient Christian teacher, named Sen-Patrick, (i.e. old

Patrick,) or even to the Missionary Palladius, who also bore the name of Patrick, as history bears witness, and who may have been the same with one of the other Patricks here mentioned, if we believe the statements, and confide in the judgment, of some of the most learned men who have lately handled the subject. (See the memoir of Mr. Petrie already quoted, and likewise the learned essay under the title of "Palladius Restitutus," in a series of articles at present coming out in successive numbers of the British Magazine: the author of which appears to be a person of deep erudition and research, but of a somewhat whimsical and scoffing tone of disposition which is the less satisfactory after the perusal of the sober and dignified illustration of the same subject from the pen of Mr. Petrie.) The large quantity of additional light thrown on this subject of late years by the investigation of such learned men, must eventually have the effect of making the history more clear and satisfactory; but at present in the existing state of things, the fresh evidence so supplied not being yet sufficiently digested, or sifted, has only the effect of unsettling former opinions and leaving the whole matter for a time more obscure and uncertain.

And if the multiplicity of Patricks makes it difficult to assign to each other the proper facts of his own history, without confusion of others, the case is in this respect still more unfavourable with regard to St. Bridget; as the reader may very well judge to be a likely state of things,

when he is told that among the dissertations appended by Father Colgan to the six lives of this saint contained in his collection, there are two articles with the following titles; one is, "*Concerning fifteen different Bridgets,*" and the one following is, "*Concerning eleven other Bridgets who are not clearly distinguished from the aforesaid.*" The six lives published by Colgan do indeed refer to the same person, the famous Bridget of Kildare, but they were published almost all many ages after that in which she lived, and it is therefore no wonder if, under all the circumstances, the authors of them attributed to her many things most uncertain, or as we would now judge, quite improbable. These lives are indeed most unsatisfactory, and far inferior to those of St. Columba already noticed; and although they agree as to the main circumstances recorded in them of her life, yet the most ancient ones of them present us with nothing but a confused, irregular, ill-arranged, crowd, of marvellous tales, little calculated to edify or instruct sensible Christians. Some of the most learned and judicious members of the Church of Rome have expressed freely their opinions of the unreasonableness and improbability of the miraculous narratives of St. Bridget, as well as of our other ancient saints, which have been published. The words of the learned Tillemont on this subject are as follows. Speaking of the disciples of St. Patrick, he says:—

"We commence with St. Brigid, because not only is there no saint so much revered in Ireland, next after

the Holy Virgin herself, but that she is also celebrated in the entire Latin Church, and even heretics themselves, notwithstanding all their false principles, cannot refrain from honouring her. Her name is placed at the first of February in the additions to St. Jerome's martyrology.

Bollandus gives us five long histories of her miracles, and mentions besides various others which he forebore to give. But, independently of what we have said of the Lives of the Irish Saints in general, Bollandus admits that those in question are scarcely anything more than a confused heap of miracles and prodigies, which have often no other air than that of fables." (See Tillemont, *Memoires*, tom. 16.)

As to the six lives of St. Bridget published by Colgan, we may observe that the first, which he supposes the most ancient, is an Irish poem of fifty-three stanzas, attributed to one St. Brogan, whom he places in the sixth century, at about the year 525 ; but Dr. Lanigan, in his Church History, makes Brogan belong to the seventh century, and perhaps if the truth were known, he might be placed in a much later age ; for of such the work seems to savour more than of such remote antiquity ; it is a worthless rhapsody. The second life is ascribed to one Cogitosus, a monk of Kildare, who flourished, if we believe Colgan, about the middle of the sixth century ; Lanigan, however, with good reason, supposes him to have lived at a much later period, and possibly so low down as the beginning of the ninth century, or somewhere before the year 832. Yet his work has every appearance of being the most ancient of the six under consideration, and as such is the most remarkable of them, and the author of it indeed may be considered to hold the same

place among the biographers of St. Bridget, that Adamnanus does with regard to St. Columbkille; the production of Cogitosus is, however, much inferior in every respect to that of Adamnanus; it is much shorter, more confused, and unsatisfactory. Lanigan characterises it as being "rather a panegyrical discourse on St. Bridget, than a regular life:" to the character of the miracles recorded in it we have already alluded. The third life is attributed by Colgan to St. Ultan, of Ardraccan, who died at a very advanced age in 650, "but," says Dr. Lanigan, "neither he nor any writer of the seventh century could have recorded the strange fables with which it is crammed It is a hodge-podge made up at a late period, in which it is difficult to pick out any truth from amidst a heap of rubbish." (Ec. Hist, vol. i. p. 380.) The fourth life is much of the same character; the author, according to Colgan, flourished about A.D. 960. The fifth treatise or life is a more clear and well-arranged composition; but very modern, being assigned by Colgan to Laurence, of Durham, a writer who died in 1160. The sixth life is a Latin poem of the eighth century, or later, according to Dr. Lanigan.

And now to come to the true or most probable facts of St. Bridget's history, as recorded by these authors; she was born, it appears, at Keshard, (now Faughar in the county of Louth,) about two miles to the north of Dundalk, at some period in the middle of the fifth century, or according to Archbishop Ussher,

in the year 453. Her father was of royal blood, and was named Dubtach: her mother's name was Brotsech or Brocessa. It is stated in the third, fourth, and fifth lives in Colgan that Brocessa was a slave purchased by Dubtach, whom he made his concubine, and that his own wife in consequence exhibited much indignation towards her, and by her continual reproaches and chiding, forced him at length to sell the handmaid again, much against his will, before the birth of Bridget. Brocessa thus became the property of a poet, who carried her to the north of Ireland, where she gave birth to the saintly Bridget. It is said, however, to have been part of the contract between Dubtach and the poet, that the child which should be born was not to be the property of the purchaser, but of the father. When therefore Bridget grew up she was, according to this account, restored to her father, who had been already delighted with the accounts he had heard of her great fame for devotedness to religion, and general excellence of character, for good sense industry, and self-denial. The maiden's return, however, was little pleasing to her step-mother, Dubtach's wife, who presently began to persecute and annoy her in every way, forcing her to perform the vilest and most degrading offices, among which are mentioned (in the fifth life, c. 8.) the keeping of pigs, and other cattle, cooking, baking, weaving, reaping, and other tasks more servile still, in and out of doors; all which she is said to have borne with the utmost patience and Christian meekness,

although everything she said or did was perverted to an evil meaning by her step-mother ; who used constantly to abuse and beat her, notwithstanding her meek and gentle bearing, and the submissive manner in which she performed the servile work assigned to her ; for as her biographer observes, "she did not consider any work servile, but sin only." (Vita 5ta, c. 14, 17.)

Dr. Lanigan however disbelieves the entire account of St. Bridget's mother having been a concubine, and exhibits a natural unwillingness to allow such a stain to interfere with the purity of the birth of one of Ireland's patron saints. His reason for disbelieving the story is, that it is not given by the more ancient writer Cogitosus, who on the contrary mentions that Bridget's parents were "Christians of noble rank:" and he thinks that the circumstance above narrated cannot agree with the fact, they "were Christians, meaning such strict Christians as were then in Ireland." Yet Cogitosus, though he does not speak of her mother's having been a slave or concubine, does record various servile offices as having been performed by the saint, such as, attending to the dairy and making butter, cooking bacon for visitors, keeping sheep, &c., things which require some explanation, and no other has been given but that supplied in the subsequent Lives, and above communicated to the reader.

In early life, Bridget came to the resolution of serving God in the state of virginity. When she came to woman's estate her parents or friends

were anxious that she should marry, and did all in their power to induce her without success. It is said (in Vita 3tia,) that when pressed to take this step, she prayed that she might be visited with some deformity, whereupon she lost one of her eyes ; which was however afterwards restored to her, when she was relieved from further solicitations upon the subject.

St. Bridget having resolved upon leading a life of holy virginity, associated with herself we are told, seven other young persons of her own sex who had formed a like resolution, and applied to a bishop named Maccaille, who being well assured of her pious intention, admitted her to the number of sacred virgins, by covering her with a white cloak, and placing a white cloth or veil over her head. We are told that during the ceremony a miraculous incident took place, for that as she knelt at the foot of the altar, the part of the wood on which she knelt recovered its original freshness, and continued green for a long time after. The reputation for sanctity which she and her companions possessed, became every day greater and greater, and numbers of virgins and widows crowded round her for admission into the pious sisterhood which she had established.

We read of her visiting after this different places in Ireland for the promotion of religion and other objects, until at length she came and settled in Kildare, the place where she spent the greatest part of her life, and enjoyed the greatest celebrity. The foundation of her famous establishment here is assigned by Ware and

Harris to the year 480, or thereabouts, and Dr. Lanigan considers it very probable that it was established some time between that and A.D. 490. She is said to have fixed her residence in Kildare, at the request of the people of that place, who influenced by her singular fame, and the supernatural endowments attributed to her, and observing the number of persons from all parts of Ireland that crowded to her residence, considered that they themselves had the best right to such a treasure on account of her being of a Leinster family; and accordingly when she complied with their request and came to dwell among them, they received her with the greatest joy, and immediately provided for her reception a suitable habitation, and assigned her also some land to assist in supporting her establishment. This was the commencement of her great monastery, and also of the town of Kildare: the name of which signifies "the church of the oak," being derived from an oak of remarkable height which grew near her abode. Although St. Bridget's community were not originally wealthy, yet they were always glad to distribute what they had, and share the use of it with the poor: she was also very hospitable to strangers and in particular to ecclesiastical persons. The extraordinary veneration in which she was held caused a great resort of persons, from the highest to the lowest, to her monastery, for the purpose of requesting her prayers; and this, added to the number of the poor and diseased who sought alms and relief from her, gave rise to a new town in the vicinity of her establishment. Feeling

now much concern and anxiety for the spiritual improvement and instruction of the community so formed, she was desirous of having a bishop over them "to consecrate churches and ordain ministers for them," and she therefore invited a famous anchorite, named Conlath or Conlian, to come and "govern the Church there in the episcopal dignity along with herself," as Cogitosus states in his prologue; where he also calls this prelate a "supreme bishop," and "chief of all the bishops." When Cogitosus says, that "she summoned" this person to come to her for such a purpose, Dr. Lanigan tells us that "this must be understood relatively to his having been chosen in consequence of her recommendation, which it was not to be doubted would be attended to by the Irish prelates at that period;" this however seems to be too great refining on the simple statement of the author in question.

The death of this celebrated lady took place according to the best authorities in A.D. 523 or 525. She departed this life in Kildare, at the age of seventy or thereabouts, having previously received the Holy Communion "of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of the living God," as her biographers inform us. (See Fourth Life, book ii. ch. 63.) She was partly a cotemporary with St. Patrick, having been born many years before his death; twelve only, according to Dr. Lanigan, as he assigns the death of St. Patrick to A.D. 465; but the date of the latter incident is too obscure to build any such conclusion upon, and it is possible

that Patrick may have lived to a much later period, and Bridget accordingly have been much older when he died. There is indeed narrated a story of her having had various interviews with the Apostle of Ireland, *after she had become abbess of a monastery*, and of her having at his request, woven the shroud, in which his body was after his death enveloped; but Dr. Lanigan altogether discards these accounts as unfounded and fictitious, and we have no disposition to quarrel with him for doing so, or dispute the correctness of his judgment with respect to these particulars.

St. Bridget or St. Bride, as she is also called, was buried in Kildare; but according to an old and well-known account given by different authors, her remains were afterwards translated to Downpatrick, in Ulster, and placed in one sepulchre with those of St. Patrick, and St. Columbkille, as is expressed in the famous stanza—

*Hi tres in Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno,
Brigida Patricius atque Columba pius.*

Three saints in Down are resting side by side,
Patrick, and Columbkille, and gentle Bride.

Of St. Bridget's character, and the state of religion and Church matters in her time, as far as they are illustrated in her history.

The reader may understand from what has been already given, that the published Lives of St. Bridget contain much less of interesting or instructive matter throwing light on historical

circumstances, than those of St. Columbkille: they are however still worth a careful inspection, not only as supplying the most ancient traditional account of what the saint's own character was believed to have been, but also as affording room for some not altogether unimportant observations on the religious system cherished by herself and others in her time, as compared with other views largely prevalent in our own day. Some of these ancient Lives are not less remarkable for what they contain than for what they omit.

We do not intend here, generally speaking, to trouble the reader with any of the marvellous and miraculous accounts contained in these works; our limits being too short to admit things altogether unsupported by credible and respectable testimony of any eye-witnesses, and for the most part not calculated to promote respect for religion. Only it may be well to illustrate the nature of some of the miracles attributed to her, by noticing briefly one attributed to her by Cogitosus. He mentions that when one of the nuns had broken her vow of chastity, and was in consequence in the prospect of becoming in due time a parent, St. Bridget miraculously interfered to save the credit of one of the sacred virgins, and by her blessing restored the person concerned to her former state, so that no subsequent occurrences revealed the matter to human eye. This unworthy tale of Cogitosus is given with all honesty by Colgan, who attempts with much apparent simplicity, to defend the writer and justify the transaction.

(See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," page 520, ch. x.; and p. 526, n. 12.) Any particular fact of the sort occurring in such an incoherent rhapsody as the tract of Cogitosus, need give us little trouble : and we may pay just as little attention to those extravagant narratives in the Third and Fourth Lives, about her devotion and mortification of the flesh, which tell us that she used to stand all night during frost and snow, up to the neck in cold water, weeping and praying. (Trias, p. 635.)

We may however gather from the different accounts furnished us, that Bridget was indeed, as we have already intimated, a woman of extraordinary piety, and entirely devoted in her whole heart and soul to the service of God, and the promotion of religion. Her love for religious improvement, and for hearing the Word of God and meditating on it, is evidenced in many of the anecdotes recorded of her : for instance in the following interesting one, given in the Fifth Life. The bishop spoken of in it is her friend Maccaille, already mentioned.

"Delighted at the holy conversation of these young persons, [i.e. Bridget and her companions,] the bishop aforesaid and all the people of the same province, had a regard also for their bodily wants, being much more ready to give, than they were to receive ; and if any thing ever remained over and above, Bridget ventured to dispose of this in charity for the use of the poor, according as each had need.

"But on a certain day, the bishop, so often mentioned, invited her and her companions to sup with him ; and when the table was laid and every thing ready, and they should have taken their meat, Saint Bridget began to request the bishop to refresh their mind with spiritual food, before gra-

tifying their natural appetite with food for the body. Which suggestion he willingly receiving, for the sake of their edification, at once began to use his eloquent tongue, taking for the subject of his discourse, the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. And after he had discoursed a good deal on the virtues to which the blessing is promised, and a good deal too, on the blessedness itself, St. Bridget, as soon as he had ended his discourse, says to her companions, 'See my beloved companions in Christ, there are proposed to you eight virtues, the cultivating of which makes people blessed, and we virgins are just eight in number; now although one virtue is so connected and linked in with another, that a person must of necessity have many virtues, who has one in its perfection, nevertheless of all these let each of us choose one, whichever she may prefer, to cultivate it with especial care. And when they made answer that they were satisfied to do this, provided however that she, who seemed to be principal among them, would first choose the virtue which she preferred, she without any hesitation chose mercy: and though night and day she strove to cultivate other virtues also, with such diligence that you would pronounce her to be a compound of virtues, she yet studied mercy in such a way, as if she thought that there was either no other virtue or none worth considering. And in like manner the others, whatever one of the proposed virtues they had each selected, to the same gave they more fervent and constant attention: nor did they cease to cherish the proposed virtue until they received the promised reward of that virtue. So then having been thus refreshed in their souls with spiritual food, they afterwards at the bishop's invitation took share of the corporal food for the nourishment of their bodies. And this afterwards became a settled practice with Bridget in all her life, that she would never on any day indulge in corporal food for the support of her flesh, unless her soul were first nourished with its food, namely, the Word of God.' (Vita 5ta. c. 30, 31.)

Soon after we read of the bishop coming to visit Bridget in her retreat, and on this occasion again her desire for spiritual improvement and for hearing the blessed Word of the Most High

was similarly manifested as the same author tells us—

“On a certain day the bishop already mentioned came in the usual manner, but attended by an unusual number of clergymen, to visit the virgin, and he found the family right glad of his arrival. For all persons are pleased with the company of those that are like themselves; for both bad men, when they meet together, become one worse by the other's company, and also the mixing together of good men in each others' society causes a mutual improvement in goodness. Wherefore inasmuch as the whole attention of that virgin was occupied in the ardent pursuit of virtues, she could not but be glad at the coming of the holy man; whose words, countenance, demeanour, and entire life formed so many helps to growth in virtue. And when he had refreshed the holy virgin and her companions with the salutary food of the Word of God, she afterwards invited himself and all his clergymen to partake of refreshment for their bodies.” (ib. cap. 36.)

So constantly indeed did Bridget wish to be meditating on the Word of God, that we are told that even when going abroad, if she had any one with her able to instruct her in it, she would not lose the opportunity of improvement as they went along the road; thus we are told that—

“Once upon a day Saint Bridget and another holy virgin sitting in the car with her, came along the plain of the Liffey: and it so happened that the person who drove the virgin was a holy presbyter, who was preaching to these virgins the Word of God. And Saint Bridget said to him, I do not like your preaching to us with your face turned away from us, put your reins behind your back, our horses will find their own way to our monastery with God's help. And so it came to pass. For the horses went the right way through the plain, while the holy presbyter continued preaching to the virgins, and they listened with attentive ears, and anxious interest.” (Vita 4ta. lib. 2, cap. 21; et 3ta. cap. 52.)

It is also mentioned as one of the miracles of the days of Bridget and Patrick, that she sent to the Apostle of Ireland to preach to her the Word of God, and that he in compliance with her desire did so preach to her and her maidens for three days together, which seemed to them all but as one hour, so intensely were they occupied with meditating on the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (vit. 3, 63, and 4 ; lib. ii. 33.)

Bridget also exerted herself personally in disseminating the knowledge of the sacred Word, for Cogitosus mentions, (chap. 23,) that it was "her habitual custom to scatter among all persons the most wholesome seeds of the word of the Lord."

The Life of St. Bridget by Cogitosus, like that of Columbkille by Adamnanus, is remarkable for some interesting features, in which both these works differ much from the style of the popular legends of saints which have been published and circulated ; the same remark applies more or less to the other Lives of Bridget, as well as that of Cogitosus. These features are such as the following ; in the first place Cogitosus though he records numerous miracles, never speaks of any of them as having been performed by any power except divine interference ; and so far is this writer from attributing such works to the Blessed Virgin, or other saints, that even the name of that eminent and blessed saint is not mentioned in all his work. Nor does he say one word about the Pope or his supremacy : or one word of tran-

substantiation; or of purgatory; or of prayers for the dead; or of prayers to saints; or of the necessity of communion with the Roman Church in order to salvation; although it is inconceivable to suppose, that if he had held the same views on these particulars, as are at present held in the Church of Rome, he should not have alluded to one of these important matters, in even a short life of her who is reckoned as the greatest saint that ever adorned the race of Irishwomen; the glory of Leinster, an honour to Europe, and second only to the Blessed Virgin Mary herself in the esteem of her countrymen.

Cogitosus gives. (ch. 35,) a very particular description of the Church of Kildare, as it stood in his time: he states that it was very large and spacious, and richly ornamented, and also attended by a numerous congregation. He tells us that at that time the remains of Bishop Conlath and St. Bridget were lying entombed on the right and left sides, respectively, of the altar, in richly ornamented monuments, beautified with decorations of gold and silver and jewels and precious stones, ornamented wreaths and so forth. There were he says in the eastern part of the church two entrance doors; through the one of which, "situated at the right side, the supreme bishop comes into the Sanctuary to the altar, accompanied by the collegiate body under his rule, and those who were appointed to perform divine service and offer the holy sacrifices of the Lord; and by

the other door at the left side the Abbess with her maidens and faithful widows only, entered to enjoy the banquet of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ," which they used to receive in both kinds, women as well as men partaking of the cup as well as of the bread. This fact sufficiently appears from one of the miracles, recorded in the Life of St. Bridget, ascribed to St. Ultan, which may be given here as illustrating this point and another not less important, but less satisfactory, feature in the received religion of the day when the Life referred to was written.

"One day, therefore," says the writer, "she came to the altar to receive the Eucharist from the bishop's hand, and looking down into the cup, she saw in it an unsightly prodigy, that is, she saw in the cup the shadow of a he-goat: now it was one of the boys belonging to the bishop that was holding the cup. Then Bridget would not drink out of this cup. And the bishop said; Why do you not drink out of this cup? So Bridget explained to him what she saw in the cup. Then the bishop said to the boy; What have you done? Give glory to God. And the boy confessed that he had committed a theft in the goatherd and had killed one of his goats, and eaten part of it. The bishop said to him, do penance and pour forth tears with weeping. And he obeyed the order, and did penance. Bridget having been invited again, came to the cup, and saw nothing of the goat in the cup. For his tears discharged his guilt." (Vita, 3ta. cap. 93.)

The reader will observe that this tale is introduced here for a twofold purpose; the first and most important is, that it shows clearly that the use of the cup with the laity was practised in St. Bridget's time, and much later, for he who wrote her life long after, had no idea of the

denial of it to them : it is well known indeed that the law forbidding it was never introduced generally until the year 1415 : but still for those who are interested in all that concerns our ancient saints, we have judged it well not to omit this observation in reference to the practice of St. Bridget in particular.

The other observation we would make on the foregoing extract concerns the doctrine of repentance contained in it. From the brevity of the story we can judge but imperfectly of the ideas which were in the author's mind, as he probably means not to give the entire of what was said by the bishop to the boy ; and the words translated "do penance" here and elsewhere, did properly signify no more than "exhibit penitential behaviour," "show yourself sorry." Yet still it is evident that the article of our faith concerning "the forgiveness of sins," was at least obscured and corrupted from the simplicity of the Gospel, in the mind of the writer of the work referred to ; or he would never have expressed himself so as apparently to mean, that a few tears were sufficient to atone for the breach of one of the commandments of God.

We have now come to the close of what we had to bring before the reader, of St. Bridget's history and the circumstances connected with it. Would to God that all her countrywomen at this day would think seriously upon those virtues and Christian graces for which she is so highly commended ; and study by the divine aid

to cherish the same in their lives; bringing forth in their conversation in this world evidences of their deadness to sin, and life unto God, in the fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and constant devotedness to the service of their Lord and Saviour.

END OF THE LIFE OF ST. BRIDGET.

ACCOUNT OF THE
DESERTION AND CURSING OF TARAH

by Bell, Book, and Candle,

BEFORE A.D. 565,

mentioned in the Life of St. Columbkille, page 72.



Diarmaid Mac Fergus Ceirbheoil, king of Ireland, who came to the throne in the year A.D. 544, was a great-grandson of Niall the Great, and reigned, according to the best authorities, for twenty-one years, at the end of which period he fell in battle, in A.D. 565. It was in the reign of this monarch that the last *Feis* or assemblage of the Irish states, was held in Tara, in the year 560, according to our excellent annalist Tighearnach.

“The reign of Dermot is however, most memorable, as that of the last monarch who held his residence at Tara, as, according to all the ancient authorities, it was abandoned after his death in 565, in consequence of the curse of St. Ruadhan, the patron of Lorrain, in the County of Tipperary. This fact is thus stated in an ancient Irish poem on the dates of the desertion of the palaces of the different Irish kings :—

*“ O reimios Diarmada duinn,
Mic Fheargusa, mic Chonuill,
O breithir Ruadhain da thoigh
Ni raibh righ a d-Teamroigh.”*

“ From the reign of Diarmait, the brown [haired]
Son of Fergus, son of Conall,
From the judgment of Ruadhan on his house,
There was no king at Temur.”

MS. Trin. Col. H. 1. 17. fol. 97, p. 2.

“The cause assigned by the poets and monkish chroniclers for the abandonment and consequent ruin of this most ancient residence of the Irish kings, is, as usual, of a somewhat legendary character. It is thus related in the Book of Clonmacnoise, as translated by Connell MacGeoghegan in 1627:—

“King Dermott, to mak manifest unto his subjects of the kingdom his magnificence, apointed a sargiant named Backlawe, with a speare, to travaile through the kingdom, with power to break such doores of the nobilities as he should find narow in such manner as the speare could not enter into the house thort wayes, or in the breadth of the doores.

“The sargiant travailing to and fro’ with his directions, putting in execution the king’s pleasure in that behalfe, by breaking of either side of such doores as he could find unfitt for that purpose, until at last he came to the house of one Hugh Gwarey, in I maine in Connaught, where being desired by those of the house to enter in the absence of the said Hugh, the sargiant said he could not bring in his speare as he ought. Noe, said they of the house, wee will break the doore of either side, and make it in such manner as you may bring in your speare, as you desire, which they accordingly did. The sargiant having the doore broken, entered and feasted with them; and soon after Hugh Gwarey came to the towen, and seeing his doore broken, he asked who brok it, and being tould that it was Backlawe, the king’s sargiant, he entered the house in a rage,

and without much ado killed the sargiant presently, and tooke his flight himselfe to Roadanus Abbot of Lohra, who was his mother's brother, thinking by his sanctitye and meanes to secure himselfe from the king's furie for killing the sargiant.

Roadanus sent his said nephew to the King of Wales, who was his well-wisher, and one in whome hee reposed great trust. The king of Ireland heareing of the killing of his sargiant by Hugh Gwarey, caused narrow search to be made for him, and understanding that he was sent to the king of Wales, wrote to him that he should send him back, or refusing soe to doe, that he with all his forces would goe over to him, and destroy his kingdome, and remaine there until he had found Hugh Gwarey, which the king of Wales perseaving, sent him back to Roadanus the Abbot againe. When King Dermott understood how he was sent over, he prepared to come to Lohra with a few of his guard, and in his coach came to Lohra aforesaid, and sent one of his men to know where Hugh Gwarey was. The man looked about him, and could see none but Roadanus, that sat in his accustomed chaire or seat, where he did use to say his prayers, under whose feet, or neere adjoyning, he caused a hole to be made in the floore, for Hugh Gwarey to rest in, whereof nobody had knowledg but Roadanus himselfe, and one more that carried him his meat at the times of refectiōs. The king, seeing the man brought him noe tydings, he entred himselfe, and was confident, Roadanus being inquired of the place where Hugh Gwarey was, would not lye, but tell truth, as was his custom. The king accordingly entred, and saluted him with harch salutations of bitter and pinching words, such as were unfitt to be spoken to such a holy and virtuous man, saying that it did not belong to one of his coat to shelter or keep in his house, one that committed such a fact, as to kill his sargiant that was imployed in the execution of his instructions, and prayed that there would be noe abbot or monk to succeed him in his place in Lothra. By God's grace, said Roadanus, there shall be abbots and monks for ever, and there shall be noe kings dwelling in Tarach from hence forward. When they had thus bitterly spoken, the king asked where Hugh Gwarey was; I know not where he is said Roadanus, if he be not where you stand, for soe he was indeed right under the king's

feet. The king thinking he spoke in jest, departed, and being out of the house, thought with himselfe, that the holy man spoke truth, and that Hugh Gwarey was under the place where he stood, and sent one of his men in againe with a pick-ax to dig the place, and to bring him out by force. As soon as the man came to the place, he struck the earth with the pick-ax; his hands lost all their strength on the sudaine in such manner as the party could not lift the pick-ax from the ground, then he cryed mercy, and besaught Roadanus for forgiveness and remission, with his benediction, which Roadanus accordingly gave him, and kept the man thenceforth with him in the habit of a monke. The king seeing him not returning entred himselfe, and caused the hole to be digged, where he found Hugh Gwairie, whom he carried prisoner to Tarach.

“ Roadanus seeing himself violently abused, and bereft of his kinsman, sent for others of the church, and followed the king to Tarrach, and there craved Hugh Gawry of the king, which he absolutely refused. After supper the king with the nobles of his court, and prelates of the church, went to bed, and about midnight, the king being heavely asleep, dreamed that he saw a great tree that rooted deeply into the earth, whose lofty top and braunches were soe high and broad, that they came neare the cloudes of heaven, and that he saw one hundred and fifty men about the tree, with one hundred and fifty broadmouthed sharp axes cutting the tree, and when it was cut, when it fell to the earth, the great noyse it made at the time of the falling thereof awakened the king out of his sleep; which dream was construed, interpreted, and expounded thus:—that this great tree, strongly rooted in the earth, and braunched abroad, that it retched to the very firmament, was the king, whose power was over all Ireland; and that the one hundred and fifty men with sharp axes cutting the tree; were those prelates saying the one hundred and fifty Psalms of David, that would cut him to the very roots to his destruction, and fall for ever. When the morning came the king, nobles, and prelates arose, and after the clergymen had done with their prayers, they besought the king againe to enlarge unto them Hugh Gwairie, which hee did as absolutely refuse as hee did before; and then Roadanus and a bushop that was with him tooke their bells which they had, which they rung hardly, and

curSED the king and place, and prayed God that noe king or queen ever after would or could dwell in Tarach, and that it should be wast for ever, without court or pallace, as it fell out accordingly. King Dermott himself nor his successors kings of Ireland, could never dwell in Tarach, since the time of that curse, but every one of the kings chose himselfe such a place as in his one discession he thought fittest, and most convenient for him to dwell, &c., as Moyleseacluin more, Donasgiah; Bryan Bowrowey, Kyncory, &c. Roadanus being thus refused, he tendered a ransom of thirty horses, which the king was content to accept, and so granted him Hugh Gwairye." (M.S. in Trin. Coll. Dub. F. 3, 19, p. 45, et seq.)

"The same account, but at greater length, is given in an Irish manuscript in Trinity College, class H. 1, 15. It is also given in the chapter "*Qualiter maledixit Themoriam*," in the Life of St. Ruadhan, in the *Codex Kilkeniensis*, an ancient vellum MS. of Lives of Saints, in Marsh's Library, chap. 5, 3, tab. 1, No. 4, F., and in the life published by the Bollandists, at the 25th of April, from the *Codex Salmaticensis*.

"The detail of circumstances connected with this event, as above given, are it must be confessed, strongly marked with those marvellous incidents which characterize the writings of the middle ages; yet there is no reason to reject the groundwork of facts on which the superstructure of fable has been raised, and which appears simply to have been that the monarch Dermot had for some offence captured the relative of the saint of Lorrach, and that the latter in the manner usual with the saints of that age, [in which the narrative was written?] took revenge by cursing him and his

palace, a curse which in a superstitious age had the effect of deterring the succeeding monarchs from residing there. It cannot indeed admit of doubt that Tara was abandoned at that period : the malediction of Ruadhan with its consequences, its referred to by the ancient scholiast on Fiech of Sletty's Irish poem in praise of St. Patrick, preserved in the *Liber Hymnorum*; and an ancient Icelandic work called the *Konungs-skuggsio*, or Royal Mirror, states that it had been abandoned and utterly destroyed, in revenge of an unjust judgment pronounced by a king who had once ruled over it."

The above curious and interesting account is entirely taken from Mr. Petrie's valuable Essay on Tara Hill which we have had occasion already to use so largely in this work. As few of our readers may ever have access to the large and expensive book in which that essay appeared, the extracts here given will no doubt be read by such persons with the greater pleasure and satisfaction, throwing as they do such material light on some not unimportant circumstances of our ancient history.

ST. PATRICK'S VISION

RELATING TO THE DIFFERENT FUTURE STATES
OF IRELAND.



In the histories of St. Patrick's life which have come down to us from ancient times, we are informed about a gréat number of visions and revelations with which he is said to have been favoured. The most remarkable and celebrated of these is one relating to the different states of Ireland that were to be in after times, which we think worth giving in full to our readers, as short and abridged accounts of it are very common in books that circulate widely among the people, and there is danger of their being led into misconceptions from not being acquainted with the entire account; the circumstance is thus recorded by the famous Joceline in his *Life of St. Patrick*, chap. 175:—

“The man of God was earnestly desirous, and prayed fervently, to be made acquainted with the present and future state of Ireland, that he might know how far she would be animated by fervour of devotion in the faith, or what account would be made of her labours in the sight of God. And the Lord heard the desire of his heart, and displayed to his eyes in a clear revelation the thing that he sought for. For whilst in the attitude of prayer, the grasp of his intellect becoming expanded, he saw the whole of Ireland apparently on fire, and the flame reaching up to

heaven ; and he heard the Angel of God distinctly saying to him, ' Such is Ireland at present before the eyes of the Lord.' Then after a short interval had elapsed, he observed in all parts of the island what appeared to be fiery mountains stretching upwards towards the sky. After this, as soon as a little space had intervened, he saw in several places lamps as it were, lighting ; and soon after, thick darkness coming on, there appeared small lamps, and at last a few coals reduced to cinders, but still burning though smothered. He is further informed by the angelic voice, that in future times the Irish states would be in different conditions so represented. But St. Patrick moistening his face with a shower of tears, was going over and over that verse of the Psalmist ; saying, '*Will God cast off for ever, or will he be no more entreated ? Or will he bring his mercy to an end for ever ? Or will God forget to show compassion, or shut up his mercy in his displeasure ?*' And the Angel said, " Look to the North part of the country, and thou shalt see a change of the right hand of the Most High, and a dispersing of the darkness before the face of the approaching light. The saint therefore lifted up his eyes, and behold he saw, first a small-sized light rising up in Ulidia, struggling for a long time with the darkness, and at length dissipating it, and lighting up the whole island with its brilliancy. Nor did this light cease to shine and grow bright until it seemed to restore all Ireland to its former fiery state. Then truly the heart of St. Patrick was filled with joy, and his tongue with exultation, while he followed up with thanksgiving all these things that had been revealed to him. The man of God understood, and expressed with his lips, that in the great splendour of the burning fire there was represented the devoutness of Christian faith and love, and religious zeal with which the people of the island were animated : that by the fiery mountains were meant the saints renowned for signs and wonderful powers, for their words and examples : by the diminution of the brightness, the decay of holiness : by the darkness spread over the entire land, the prevalence of infidelity in it. By the intervening spaces of time, the intervals occurring between successive periods. And as for the time of darkness, the Irish take it to be the period during which Gurmundus first, and after him Turgesius, the Pagan princes of Norway, held pos-

session of the kingdom of Ireland, which they had seized by war. For in those days, the holy people used to lie hid in dens and caves, like the coals of fire covered with ashes, for the purpose of concealment from the view of the reprobrates that were putting them to death all the day long, like sheep for the slaughter. From which state of things it came to pass that various rites were introduced in Ireland contrary to ecclesiastical laws, and prelates of holy Church, ignorant of God's law, framed new Sacraments contrary to its form. But the light that arose first out of the Northern province, and dispersed the darkness, although after a long struggle, the Irish assert to be St. Malachy, who was governor first in the Church of Down, and afterwards in the Metropolis of Armagh, and restored Ireland to the state of Christian order. The English, on the other hand, consider that that light is to be ascribed to their own coming into the country, because then the Church appeared in their judgment to be advanced into a better state: Religion seemed to be planted and propagated, and the sacraments of the Church, and ordinances of the law of Christ, to be attended to with more ritual propriety. But I do not attempt to settle the thing either one way or the other, but am of opinion that the discussion and decision of it should be left to the Divine judgment."

This is the entire of what Joceline gives on this subject in his Latin Life of St. Patrick. It is not our intention to offer any comment on it in the way of explanation, but rather to imitate the prudent reserve of the author who narrates the story. It is well however to remind the reader that Joceline who wrote the above account was a Welchman, who was brought over to Ireland by one of the English invaders, John de Courcy. Joceline was of course a member of the Church of Rome, as were all the English invaders; and he of course sympathized with them in their exertions to establish their ecclesiastical system in this country;

which must not be forgotten in reading the remarks made by him at the conclusion of the above story. Joceline's history was written in the year 1185: (vid. Colgan, vit. 6ta. not. 1;) this was just twelve or thirteen years after the sitting of the famous synod of Cashel. (in A.D. 1172,) in which a law was made to do away with the old 'rites and ceremonies of the Irish Church, and substitute for them the ritual of the Church of England, which was at that time a part of the Roman Church. All of us know what a decay of piety and almost entire destruction of religion took place in Ireland, when the fierce Danes and Norwegians took possession of the country in the ninth century, and how churches and colleges, monasteries and libraries, were destroyed by those savage invaders. It cannot however well be said of these Pagans that they introduced strange rites or new sacraments, because they rather destroyed and persecuted the faith, than corrupted or altered it, as being altogether opposed to the Christian religion. But when their descendants were converted to Christianity, those of them that lived in Ireland in the eleventh century would not join the Irish Church, nor submit to the Irish bishops, but put themselves under the archbishop of Canterbury, and so were immediately connected with the Church of Rome, and subject to her authority, a sort of connection which the Irish bishops of that time, and especially the primate, did not much relish. Perhaps the introduction of the English ritual above mentioned, and the doctrines involved in

it, may throw some light on the opinions of the Irish at that time about the introduction of new sacraments and other rites; for it is well known that the great body of the Irish people, in those districts which were more independent of English control paid little regard to the enactments of the synod of Cashel. (See Lannigan.)

It is worthy of remark that when St. Patrick is represented as having foreseen the great falling away from religion that was to take place in Ireland by reason of the Danish invasions, we are never told that he was taught to anticipate anything of the Reformation under Edward the Sixth and Queen Elizabeth, although the consequences of this important movement have been scarcely less considerable or less durable than those of the former transactions on the part of the Danes, but rather perhaps more so.

ST. BRIDGET'S VISION,

RELATING TO THE DIFFERENT STATES OF
IRELAND.

St. Bridget, as well as St. Patrick, is said to have been favoured with a very remarkable revelation relating to the various conditions of Ireland in different ages. There are two different versions of the story, agreeing in the

main as to the nature of the fact prophetically stated, but yet so different in the details as to seem like two different things more than two accounts of the same thing. The reader, however, who regards either account as authentic, will not find much difficulty in supposing that a repetition of the revelation under a somewhat different form was as possible and likely as a single communication of the sort. To do full justice to the subject we give both accounts in the words of the original authors. The first is from Joceline's *Life of St. Patrick* (c. 95): it is given immediately in connection with the account already quoted by us in *Patrick's Life*, of that saint's preaching for three days together and explaining the Gospels to the people. After describing which the writer goes on with his narrative in the following strain:—

“St. Bridget then was present at the meeting aforesaid, and she sank her head and fell asleep. The holy prelate would not allow any person to arouse or wake the beloved one of God until she herself willed it. For as it was plain in the end, that verse of Canticles suited her well enough, ‘*I sleep and my heart waketh* :’ because her spouse was revealing to her his secrets. When the same holy virgin afterwards awoke, St. Patrick bid her tell them all what she saw in her sleep. She accordingly did as the saint told her, and said, ‘I saw an assemblage of persons arrayed in white, and ploughs, and oxen, and fields of corn, all fair and white: then all those same things covered with spots: then afterwards, all completely black. At last I saw sheep and pigs, dogs and wolves, fighting and quarrelling with one another.’ And St. Patrick expounded the vision, and said that all the whiteness aforesaid referred to the state of the world as it then was. For all who were in it, prelates and people, were fruitful and fervent in faith and good works, according to the doctrine of the Evangelists and

Apostles. He said that the various spotted features regarded the time of the following generation, in which they would continue pure in the faith indeed, but would stain it by evil and wicked works. The subsequent blackness he affirmed to answer to the time of a following generation, wherein men were to profane their lives, not merely by wicked works, but even by renouncing the Christian faith. The fighting of the sheep, swine, dogs, and lions, he pronounced to be the controversies between innocent and corrupt prelates, good ones and bad, that would take place in the days of a late generation, that is, after the lapse of very many years. Having said this the saint broke up the assembly, and retired. And I believe that no person doubts the virgin's vision, or the explanation of it given by the saintly interpreter, supported as it is by unquestionable miraculous power."

This is Joceline's account of St. Bridget's vision: now for the other, which is given in St. Bridget's own Life, attributed to St. Ultan, of Ardracchan; (Colgan, Vita 3ta. cap. 57,) it is as follows:—

"Now after this St. Bridget went away with bishop St. Patrick to the north of Ireland. And one day St. Patrick was preaching the Word of God to his men: but at that hour St. Bridget was asleep. And when she had awaked, St. Patrick said to her: O Bridget, why have you been asleep during the Word of Christ? When she heard these words, she fell upon her knees and implored pardon, saying; Spare me, my father, spare me my revered master, for at this hour I have seen a dream. And Patrick said, Tell it to us. Said Bridget, I thine handmaid, saw four ploughs ploughing this island, and there were sowers sowing their seed, and it immediately grew up, and began to ripen: and streams of new milk filled the furrows; and those sowers were clad in white raiment. After this I beheld other ploughs and ploughmen of a black colour, who turned up that good crop, and cut it with the ploughshare and sowed tares, and rivers of water filled the furrows.' And Patrick said, 'O Virgin, it is a real wonder-

ful vision you have seen. We are the good ploughmen who are cutting up men's hearts with the ploughs of the four Gospels, and we are sowing the Word of God, and the milk of pure doctrine. But in the latter days of the world there will come bad teachers, sympathising with bad men, who will subvert our doctrine, and seduce almost all the people.' "

Now it is not our business here to attempt to explain all this curious passage; but certainly taking the lowest view of it, there are some remarkable coincidences between it and St. Patrick's vision, and circumstances that have actually occurred in this island. The introduction of new sacraments and other rites mentioned in the preceding narrative of St. Patrick's vision, and the checking and discouraging the reading of the Bible, which has so largely prevailed in the country, will naturally be present to the mind of the thoughtful reader of the above accounts, when he ponders on them with a view to compare the legend and history together. Interesting comments might be added on this subject, but we refrain from pressing them on the reader, feeling assured that it is as well to leave it to his own judgment and sagacity to draw the conclusions that are most justly deducible from these narratives.

OF THE PROPHECIES RELATIVE TO THE STATE OF
IRELAND, ATTRIBUTED TO
ST. COLUMBKILLE.

Colgan's account of St. Columbkille's prophecies.

The ancient biographers of Columbkille do not record any prophecies of his, except such as related to things occurring either in his own days or in the times immediately following : nor do we find any others attributed to him for *five hundred* years and upwards, from the time when he died. But as St. Patrick and St. Bridget had both been honoured with prophetic visions of the future destinies of Ireland, it seemed very hard to such authors as Manus O'Donel, if Columbkille were to have no share in these wonderful revelations ; and therefore, in his life of St. Columba, this writer tells us that the saint prophesied of the destruction of Tara, foretelling that "in the end of time it should be quite desolate, destitute of king, and wholly deprived of its other advantages, as an instance of the instability of human affairs." (Colgan's 'Triad, p. 402.) O'Donel further gives a brief account of a prophecy, which he says, his patron delivered about the Irish people, the sins they were to be guilty of in after time, such as unjust wars, shedding of in-

nocent blood, irreligion and profaneness, and also the judgments and miseries that were to come upon them for these crimes; and how they should afterwards again repent, and turn to God, and be prosperous. But it is really quite sickening to peruse O'Donel's trash, or pay any attention to what he writes; and as Dr. Lanigan says of his miracle stories, so we may say of his prophecies, that we are not bound to receive them on the authority of such a writer as he.

However even O'Donel himself has nothing of detail; he does not enter into any particulars, concerning these prophecies; for instance, he does not mention any one particular nation that would have to do with the Irish in war, nor how matters were to be carried on, nor what battles would be fought, nor what generals would be distinguished in these campaigns, nor any thing about the times of the events which he so vaguely alludes to. Father Colgan, however, gives us some more particular information on the subject, (from *Giraldus Cambrensis*,) in the place where he enumerates the writings of St. Columbkille: and as we are desirous that the reader should have a full and clear understanding of this matter, we think it as well to set before him the entire of what Colgan says in reference to it, following the English translation of the editor of Sir James Ware's works. (See Harris's Ware, vol. ii. *Writers of Ireland*, p. 18. Colgan's *Trias*, p. 472.)

“Colgan hath published an account of such of his prophecies as he looks upon to be genuine and free from suspicion, for he fears that there are some reckoned as

his which are not genuine, and he therefore enumerates only a few which he thinks are attributed to him with more probability of their genuineness.

“The first is, *Of the arrival of the English, and their subduing Ireland.* Giraldus Cambrensis takes notice of the fulfilling of this prophecy. ‘Then,’ says he, ‘was fulfilled the prophecy of *Columb of Ireland*, as it is said to be; who long since foretold, that in this war there should be so great a slaughter of the inhabitants that their enemies should swim in their blood: and the same prophet writes (as it is reported) that a certain poor man and a beggar, and one as it were banished from other countries, should with a small force come to *Down*, and should take possession of the city, without authority from his superior. He also foretold many wars, and various events. All which are manifestly completed in *John Curcy*; who is said to have held this prophetic book written in *Irish*, in his hand, as the mirror of his works. One reads likewise in the same book, that a certain young man with an armed force should violently break through the walls of *Waterford*, and having made a great slaughter among the citizens, should possess himself of the city. That the same young man should march through *Wexford*, and at last without difficulty enter *Dublin*. All which it is plain were fulfilled by Earl *Richard [Strongbow]*. Further, that the city of *Limerick* should be twice deserted by the English, but the third time should be held. Now already it seems it hath been twice deserted; first by *Raymond*, secondly by *Philip de Breusa*, &c. Wherefore (according to the said prophecy) being a third time assaulted, it shall be retained; or rather, it was long after fraudulently overthrown, under the government of *Hamo de Valoinges*, Lord Justice, and by *Meiler* recovered and repaired.’ Thus far *Cambrensis*; who afterwards mentions this prophecy, as well as that of other saints on the same subject, in these words. ‘The Irish are said to have four prophets, *Moling*, *Breacan*, *Patrick*, and *Columbkille*, whose books in their native language are yet extant among them. Speaking of this conquest, they all bear witness, that in after times *Ireland* should be polluted with many conflicts, long strifes, and much bloodshed. But they all say, that the *English* shall not have a complete victory till a little before the day of judgment; that the island of *Ireland* should be totally sub-

dued from sea to sea, and curbed in by castles ; and though the people of *England*, by trying the fate of war, should often happen to be disordered and weakened (as *Breacan* testifies ; that a certain king should march from the desert mountains of *Patrick*, and on *Sunday* should break into a certain camp in the woody parts of *Ophelan*, and almost all the *English* be drove out of Ireland), yet, by the assertions of the same prophets, they should continually keep possession of the eastern maritime parts of the island.' This is the account *Cambrensis* hath given upwards of five hundred years ago.

"The second prophecy ascribed to *St. Columb* is *Concerning the Kings* of Ireland, the divers states, wars, and other future misfortunes of that country, and this is called,

"*Buile Choluimchille*, the Madness, or Extatic Rapture of *Columbkille*."

"Colgan tells us that this piece was written in *Irish* metre, and that he had it in his possession."

So ends Harris's account of *St. Columbkille's* prophecies about Ireland, and thus the reader is put in possession of what Father Colgan and he could bring to light on this subject, and what *Giraldus Cambrensis* hath written concerning it. We may guess from Colgan's not publishing the *Irish* prophecies in verse which he speaks of, what his opinion was concerning their genuineness and general character.

Of the Prophecies of the Father of Lies, lately attempted to be fathered upon St. Columbkille.

The infernal craftiness and diabolical malignity of the accursed enemy of man's salvation, is seldom, perhaps, more conspicuously apparent, or seldom engaged in a more appropriate

and characteristic employment, than when he is perverting what is good, and pure, and holy, so as to make it an engine for the working out of his detestable purposes of malice, and teaching his children to abuse holy names and holy things for the effecting of what is base, and ungodly, and abominable, among all good Christians. Miserable to relate, the good name of holy St. Columbkille has been thus abused, and the matters which are now to be brought before the reader, (and which have been already alluded to at the commencement of this saint's life) will furnish a sad and striking instance of the dreadful wickedness of which we speak.

Many of our readers, most of them perhaps, have heard of the vile productions that have been circulated about the country of late years, under the title of *Columbkille's Prophecies*, or *Columbkille's Sayings, Moral and Prophetic*; the more correct and proper name of which would be that given at the head of this article. It is necessary, however, to introduce here something of a full account of these lying prophecies, in order to make them known to a class of readers who, in all probability, have had little opportunity of seeing them heretofore, and who ought to know something of them, as they might make good use of such knowledge: we are also desirous to refer to them for the sake of cautioning the simple and innocent against such works, and warning any of our readers who may have been soft enough to be taken in by them already. For these reasons, therefore, however humbling it may be to quote such

stuff, we shall feel it desirable to give long extracts from the Prophecies alluded to.

The precious hotch-potch commences with the following rhodomontade :—

“NOTES

TAKEN FROM THE PROPHECIES OF

ST. COLUMBKILLE,

Of the Remarkable Events that will happen to England and Ireland, before and after the war, &c., &c.

“Guards will be set on every cross road to prevent trespass; and directions on every cross road to show the way; newspapers will be prevented to be given publicly; faith and priests will fail, and many of the priests of the flock will fall away from their purity; the trained guards of this nation will be raised three times after each other; there will be three great cesses, or taxes, laid on, so as that the poor men of this nation will deny houses and property; the men of substance will pay two of them, but the third government will not get time to collect it; they say they will pay none, but give battle. An increase of rats and mice, the like of which was never before seen in this kingdom; the neighbours will be false and mistrustful of each other, will slander and cheat each other, the greatest men will set the example first; the seasons of the year will change, many rivers will overflow their banks, and the sea in many places inundate its bounds, more so than in any other former ages. Pounds (pinfolds) will be filled with cattle, and the jails with men, for the non-payment of cesses; thus men will be in confinement without a crime. The Catholics will obtain some liberty before the real troubles of Ireland, for some short time; but will be deprived of it again by a cruel order from government. *They will force the Catholics to go three Sundays to their Protestant Churches.*

“A clergyman will rise in the south that will reform millions from the debasing vice of Intemperance; he will

be followed by thousands, and the most intemperate will glory in wearing the badge of sobriety. Every parish will have a society, headed by the Catholic priests to uphold and maintain temperance."

There is a fine prophet for you, endued with a wonderful foresight of *past* events: his prophecies quoted here are marked as having been printed in 1841, and the title page, with vast simplicity, informs the reader that they were NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED. It is very likely that in the next edition of them we shall have a prophecy of the late state trials, and a full account of all the ins and outs of the entire business connected with them: for the writers of these productions find it convenient from time to time to change and alter, add and subtract, as circumstances may make it convenient; and when the prospects of the people change, and former prophecies (so far as they depended on imagination and forethought rather than on observation and memory) appear to be belied, it is only necessary to regard the former as being out of date, with last year's almanack, and to devise for the *gullibles* a new set of predictions *never before published, or heard of, or spoken, or written*; while the fiend who circulates the venom laughs hellishly in his sleeve at the gaping earnestness with which the unwary peasant comes to purchase the last penn'orth of news from heaven.

But to proceed with our nauseous extracts. We read, shortly after the passage above quoted, that

"There will be five or six years before the troubles of Ireland that a very near relation to the King of France will be called home as king, but will never receive the oath or crown, and will remain a short time in a state of fear and uncertainty. *The remains of a noble warrior, who was once Emperor of France, but died an exile in a small African Island, (a prisoner of the English,) will be honourably removed to Paris, and a monument raised to his memory by the people of France.* There will be two armies to invade Ireland, and will not succeed, [sic] but the third will. When the third national army is rising, it will be better to go and take up arms with them, than to remain at home, that will be the last militia. [sic.] A camp will be fixed on Glanmore, near Dundalk, and it will be removed from that to Kildare; there will be a second camp fixed at Lurgan Green. Before the rise out of that, [sic] the Protestant soldiers and Catholics disagree, and never will join again. The second division of the Catholics, and the third of the north, leave their own country, and go to the west of Ireland (Connaught); there will be some time between the departure of the first and the second. The first will go of their own free will; but the second will be persecuted, and compelled by force of arms, &c. But as to Emigration to that country by the major part of the Catholics of the Valley of the Black Pig, they will in time, eleven hundred and ninety-six Sundays, that must come in date after the departure of the first division. [sic.]

"There will be two great battles on sea, particularly on the coast of Italy; *and after the battle, England will have but two ships of war safe out of all their fleet.* There will come some Danes to Ireland as allies to the English; but the inhabitants and the Irish soldiers and them will disagree, [sic.] and the most of the Danes killed and gone away. The parliament, before the invasion, and after the two sea battles, will disagree, and the Irish members will leave the house and their seats, as they find they can be of no service to *themselves* [sic.] or their country any longer. Some short time before this there will come such a sickness of fever and plague over the land of the Island of Saints, that many thousands will be carried off without the sword or warfare."

Some of our readers may wonder at our taking the trouble of introducing so much of this absurd and disgusting farrago of wickedness. But let it be remembered that with all their incoherence and absurdities these lying prophecies have not been written without cunning and design, nor circulated without some effect and success. While it is impossible to shape them into any one system, or collect from them an intelligible representation of a series of facts to be anticipated in future history, there are at the same time broad features and striking points constantly presented to the reader's mind, which, so far as they can gain attention and credit, are eminently useful to promote the ends of the infidel, the revolutionist, and the traitor. The prophet seems scarcely to venture on the promise that Ireland shall ever be independent of external rule, but yet the ignorant and disaffected have large hopes and bright prospects held forth for their minds to work upon. They are led to think that a *scrimmage* will yet come, in which their cupidity may find opportunity of seizing some of the spoils, or their superstitious "theologic hatred" be able to luxuriate in cruelties and carnage such as in former days disgraced our country: and, as it were to suggest a model for their imitation when occasion may occur, the Corsican limb of Antichrist is represented as having been "a noble warrior." England, they are taught, is to suffer great reverses, and foreign enemies to humble her dignity and power to the dust: but this is not all, for in addition to encouragements of that sort,

other, and if possible stronger, motives, arising from revenge and the desire of self-defence combined, are suggested to the reader's mind; and he is warned that he is the victim of an unnatural and bloodthirsty conspiracy, (as will be seen in what follows,) the only way to escape which, of course, will be to anticipate retaliation, and be first in crime. Immediately after the sentence last quoted the prophet of lies proceeds in this strain :—

“ After the Irish members will part from the British and leave England, and come home, the British members will then find that all their plans, and ways and means, is of no service [*sic*] to keep the enemy from invading, *and that their boasting fleet is cut away and destroyed*, they then will give orders to break down the bridges, mills, and cut up high roads in many places, and canals; so as to cause no ready passage for carts, coaches, or carriages of any kind; and then to take all the cattle and ready moveables, and provisions from the inhabitants and owners, by the armed men of the kingdom, into the centre of Ireland; and all that is not ready to be moved and carried off, to burn it on the spot or place where found; and he is the wisest man that burns his own place, and hides the best of his own property under the earth, before this order comes on. The parliament will then pass the Black Bill, and send a copy over of the said bill to the chief governor of Ireland: then all the Protestant clergy will be privately commanded to appear at Dublin, and to sign the bill; and to set example the Lord Lieutenant will sign first; then all the members will sign but five, and they will not sign but be sworn to secrecy. *The purpose of the bill is to murder the Catholics, as far as the strength of the Protestant army can go over the kingdom*; and that will be the parts of the land called the Valley of the Black Pig, comprehended in the province of Ulster, the counties of Sligo and Leitrim, in Connaught, north of the Shannon river, and the county of Longford, and the north-west corner of Westmeath and East Meath, aided and assisted

by ten thousand of a Scotch mob, commanded by one Campbell of the Argyle family, will be the actors of this bloody deed. [Sic.]

“Orders will be sent over Ireland to kill all the dogs, for that the owners were not paying the duty of an act made in that case, to the interest of the government duty ; and it is their will and pleasure they must kill the dogs ; this is a covert to help to keep secret their bloody deeds. Then there will be three times a peace before this horrid deed begins ; two of them first is sincerely to be signed by the enemy in England, [sic,] but the third will be forged by themselves, to lull the Catholics asleep ; for at that time the enemy will grant them no peace ; for as England ordered this peace to be stuck upon town-halls, market-houses, church-doors, and the cross of all roads, on the side of all coaches coming from Dublin, through all the post-towns of Ireland. *The next Sunday after this horrid carnage begins, at the hour of eleven o'clock that night.* For the fleets and mighty squadrons of the enemy have put to sea the Friday before that, and the murder commences ; there is a mist and a thick fog comes on the earth with it, and every hour in relation the mist and the fog get darker, so that on the day of the carnage it is as dark as night, and will be so all over the Valley of the Black Pig, unto the end of the business, *that will last and continue for four nights and three and a half days ; that is from Sunday night, at eleven o'clock, to the next Thursday, between the hours of ten and eleven in the forenoon of the day.*”

The prophet of lies then proceeds with a great deal more of this trash, until at last his threadbare imagination being quite exhausted, he stumbles again upon this same part of his ravings, and gives us further elucidation of his views concerning it :—

“Lord Abercorn will be sent over to Ireland with an army of twenty or twenty-five thousand men ; they will embark on Friday and land on Wednesday. The men of the black gowns will be summoned from all parts of the kingdom to Dublin : with speed they will all obey, except

five, one in Monaghan, one in Moneyglass, one in Enniskillen, and one in Ballinamuck. These knowing full well what is going on at the Castle of Dublin, immediately they begin to preach to the people to unite and arm themselves, and stand in defence of their country. They will rise five armies, which will be united in one, and this army will be called the Volunteers of Ulster. When the Lord Lieutenant comes to the knowledge of the determination of the army, he and the privy council will send for sixty thousand Danes—forty thousand of them for Ireland, and twenty thousand for Scotland; the Irish will know nothing of it. *The Sunday after, the men of the black gowns, in their respective parishes, will preach to the people of a general massacre of all the Catholics of the kingdom, as a thing that will never be done, and on that day no woman will be admitted into any church in Ireland.* The army will go to church with their arms reversed; and on that night will be the brightest night ever known, before the long nights and bloody blankets, *forty thousand Catholics will be butchered in the Valley of the Black Pig. There will be a general massacre of the Catholics from Slane to Screen.* Before this takes place the cocks and dogs will forewarn the Catholics of the approaching danger. *This slaughter goes on for eight weeks: it begins between the two Lady-days in harvest.* The English army will be brought to the Curragh of Kildare, with great guns and ammunition," &c.

Then we are told that a three days battle is to take place there, and so forth, but the reader is, no doubt, longing for the end of this ungodly and lying stuff, and we shall therefore pass on to another part, and consider the prospect which the prophet of lies holds out with respect to the foreign aid that is likely to come in to increase the confusion. He says that:—

“Scotland will be first invaded by different tribes of the north of Europe. England will be invaded by French and Germans, Turks, Huns, and snakes, and many others of

divers nations. England will give up at the first attack of the enemy, and retreat with the grand army into Scotland, and there make a stand, and fight it out; so that in Scotland there will be the greatest bloodshed, horror, carnage, and loss of mankind, than ever was in the three kingdoms at any given time," &c.

"Ireland will be invaded by Spaniards, Portuguese, French, Turks, and rattle-snakes; but the Spaniards will be more in number than any of the other powers, and they will have the chief command over the rest of the allies, and bold Derragh O'Donald will command the Spanish grand army in chief, and the king of Spain's son will be second in command under O'Donald; there will be snow on the clothes and armour of O'Donald's division first at landing in Lough Swilly. The enemy will land in seven divisions, to compose the army of Ireland; the first division will land in a bay in the county of Kerry, two miles to the west of Dingle, or in a place called Ventry; [*go de a deir tu air sin, Padruig o Loindres, mo bhuaghal;*] the second will land in the county of Wicklow, the third will land in the county of Mayo, the fourth will land at Donaghadee, the fifth will land in Killibegs, the sixth will land at Lough Swilly, six miles to the west of Derry; the last will land in the county of Donegal; the sixth division under bold Derragh O'Donald will be the greatest in number of any that will come to the Irish or British shores; they will be in thirty-one or eighty-one ships." [Sic!!!]

According to the pedlar of lies, these divisions are generally successful: for instance, Derragh O'Donald and his men take Derry, without the loss of a single man, and in like manner, —

"The division that lands at Donaghadee will maintain their ground, and clear the country before them to Armagh and Dundalk. The division that lands in Kerry, at Ventry Bay, will subdue the country into Limerick city, where the red coats of Munster will muster in the plains to the east of Limerick, where there will be fought a

bloody battle ; the place is called Singland in the old Irish, *and the victory will be gained by the strangers to the joy of the Catholics of Munster.*

“The division that lands in Wicklow marches on for Dublin, and five miles south of that city *they fight a very smart battle for three hours, and gains the capital of Ireland.* [sic.] The division that lands in Mayo, in Connaught, will clear the country till they are joined by bold Derragh’s forces from the north ; the beaten and scattered troops of the north will run, and gather at Ardee ; and all the beaten troops will fly from Dublin and Leinster, and join the north at Ardee ; so that all the living red coats of the two provinces will form in one body, and encamp near Ardee ; and in despair will stand there as walls of iron and brass, with the resolution to conquer or die, as they then know the whole isle is in the possession of strangers, only Louth, Meath, and Athlone.”

We are then told that the red coats are to be attacked at Ardee, and a dreadful battle fought, with “great carnage of the Catholic army,” who are put to the worse until the arrival of timely aid of foreign troops under the command of “the young Prince of Sardinia, a most skilful officer, drest in the grandest order of war, their clothes richly decorated with silver and gold.” This warrior, (*who is conceived to be a regular descendant of the Stuart family, and in right of this to deny the lawfulness of Queen Victoria’s sovereignty in Great Britain,*) is said to reverse the fortune of war on this occasion, and to gain a complete victory, “after killing the most part of the enemy :” of whom however eight hundred being left alive, retreat to Drogheda. The lying prophet then proceeds thus :—

“Afterwards the retreating party from the battle fought five miles south of Dublin, comes to the west of Slane, two

miles, and this party at Drogheda then marches on the south side of the Boyne, and joins the other, west of Slane, and the whole then retreats to Athlone, on the Shannon, where the last part of the body of the army of England is defeated in Ireland. Those that remain alive after the battle and general defeat at Athlone, will retreat north and north east; then England in those unhappy days will be so much distressed, harassed, and overpowered, by land and sea, from and before the invasion, to the last battle, and their final destruction, that they will not be able to help their friends in Ireland; so that each of the two countries must stand the shock of the invaders single-handed. *These dreadful horrors are to happen to England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the reign of the thirteenth king and queen, from the commencement of heresy in England.*"

According to this traitor-prophet, the first king that established or commenced heresy in England would be, we may suppose, Henry the Eighth. Reckoning from him downwards, we have the following series:—1. Henry VIII.; 2. Edward VI.; 3. Mary; 4. Elizabeth; 5. James I.; 6. Charles I.; 7. Charles II.; 8. James II.; 9. William III. and Mary; 10. Anne; 11. George I.; 12. George II.; 13. George III.; 14. George IV.; 15. William IV.; 16. Victoria. The thirteenth monarch would therefore be George the III., and so perhaps part of these false prophecies may be as old as his reign, and written first with a view to it, but in the convenient elastic ambiguity of lying predictions it is only necessary to reckon from a new date, Elizabeth's reign, in which the establishment of heresy may easily be misrepresented as occurring, and the prophecy would answer for the time of William IV. And if with a little further allowance, we omit Elizabeth's name, and

reckon from it, not inclusive, Queen Victoria herself may seem pointed at. In such an accommodating way do these wicked villanies adapt themselves to changing circumstances. To advance a step further, if occasion require, in the reign of a future monarch, it will only be necessary in a new edition of the lies, to print 14 or 15 for 13.

But enough of this *assafœtida* ;—my reader will scarcely desire more, and enough has been given to serve the purpose intended. Only one observation remains to be made ; a question will naturally occur to many in this place which should not be left unanswered. It is this : What is the use of dwelling so much on these vile and contemptible fabrications, as if any one believed them ? Or is it to be supposed that any persons are silly enough to credit them ? Yes, there are hundreds and thousands who do so : and if any one doubts the fact, let him only make inquiry among the peasantry with whom those lying prophecies have circulated, or among the gentry who are familiar with their views and feelings, and he will find to what an extent the simple are imposed upon by such wicked devices : let him inquire among any of the clergy who are active among the people in the work of the ministry in north Leinster, suppose ; in Drogheda, for instance, or Kingscourt, or any other such place, and he will learn that there are multitudes of the ignorant and simple-minded, who receive the lying prophecies fathered upon St. Columbkille with implicit faith : and that they are consequently in continual expectation of the coming

of those times of turbulence and blood, which the predictions here described allude to : so that in the late times of violent agitation, and trembling expectation of change, they were filled with the idea that *the time* was coming. And although they be now for a time disappointed, and their expectations unfulfilled, still the written lies remain with power to work as effectively for evil at any future time.

But a stranger will say, " Have we not heard that the Irish are remarkable for the faithfulness and accuracy with which they transmit from age to age their historical traditions, and how then have they come to forget thus far the character of the saintly Columbkille, or how has he become so degraded in their eyes, that they could suppose him to have penned the flagitious nonsense ascribed to him in these prophecies ?" Alas ! *thereby hangs a tale*, but here is not the place to unfold it.

**A TRUE MESSAGE FROM THE ALMIGHTY JUDGE
OF ALL THE EARTH TO THE PROPHETS
THAT PROPHECY LIES.**

(From the Douay Bible.)

Jeremias. xiv. 14, 15, 16.

“And the Lord said to me: ‘The prophets prophesy falsely in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, nor have I spoken to them: they prophesy unto you a lying vision, and divination and deceit, and the seduction of their own heart.’

“Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, whom I did not send, that say: Sword and famine shall not be in this land: By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.

“And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, because of the famine and the sword, and there shall be none to bury them, they and their wives, their sons and their daughters, and I will pour out their own wickedness upon them.”

Chapter xxiii. 15, 16, 21, 22.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts to the prophets: Behold I will feed them with wormwood, and will give them gall to drink,

for from the prophets of Jerusalem corruption is gone forth into all the land.

“ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts : Hearken not to the words of the prophets that prophesy to you, and deceive you : they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.

“ I did not send prophets, yet they ran : I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied.

“ If they had stood in my counsel, and had made my words known to my people, I should have turned them from their evil way, and from their wicked doings.”

Chapter xxvii. 15.

“ For I have not sent them, saith the Lord : and they prophesy in my name falsely : to drive you out, and that you may perish, both you and the prophets that prophesy to you.”

Chapter xxix. 21, 22.

“ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, to Achab the son of Colias, and to Sedecias the son of Maaseias, who prophesy unto you in my name falsely : Behold I will deliver them up into the hands of Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon ; and he shall kill them before your eyes.

“ And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah, that are in Babylon, saying : The Lord make thee like Sedecias, and like Achab, whom the king of Babylon fried in the fire.”

Ezekiel xiii. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9.

“Thus saith the Lord God: Woe to the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit and see nothing.

“They see vain things, and they foretell lies, saying The Lord saith: whereas the Lord hath not sent them: and they have persisted to confirm what they have said.

“Have you not seen a vain vision, and spoken a lying divination: and you say, The Lord saith; whereas I have not spoken.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because you have spoken vain things and have seen lies: therefore behold I come against you saith the Lord God.

“And my hand shall be upon the prophets that see vain things, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the counsel of my people, nor shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord God.”

Such are the solemn denunciations of the Lord against those who blasphemously presume to invent and circulate lies in His name. We must remember that all foreknowledge of future events belongs to God only, and that true prophecy comes not according to the will of man, but is only the voice of the Holy Spirit, speaking by man's mouth. And if it be a wicked and insulting offence for one to ascribe wilfully to his fellow-man mischievous things which he never said, how much more wicked it is to be

guilty of the blasphemy of putting what is lying, foolish, and deceitful, into the mouth of the Blessed God himself, and attributing to him the authorship of malicious impostures. Let all true Irishmen therefore scout from them with indignant scorn and horror such impudent fabrications: and pray for the conversion and repentance of those who have thus dared to profane holy things, *speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their consciences seared*, while they dare to trifle in this way with the majesty of religion, and the divine attributes of the God of Heaven.

FINIS.

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